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JAN. 1990

# VIDEO

magazine

ANNUAL  
EDITORS' CHOICE

## THE YEAR'S BEST

Our Award-Winning Picks

### DREAM MACHINE FOR THE '90s

A VCR  
Wish List

### PACIFIC OVERTURES

Japan Show  
Report

### A FINE MADNESS

Inside Tape  
Collecting

### VIDEOTESTS

Super VHS VCR,  
Combi Player

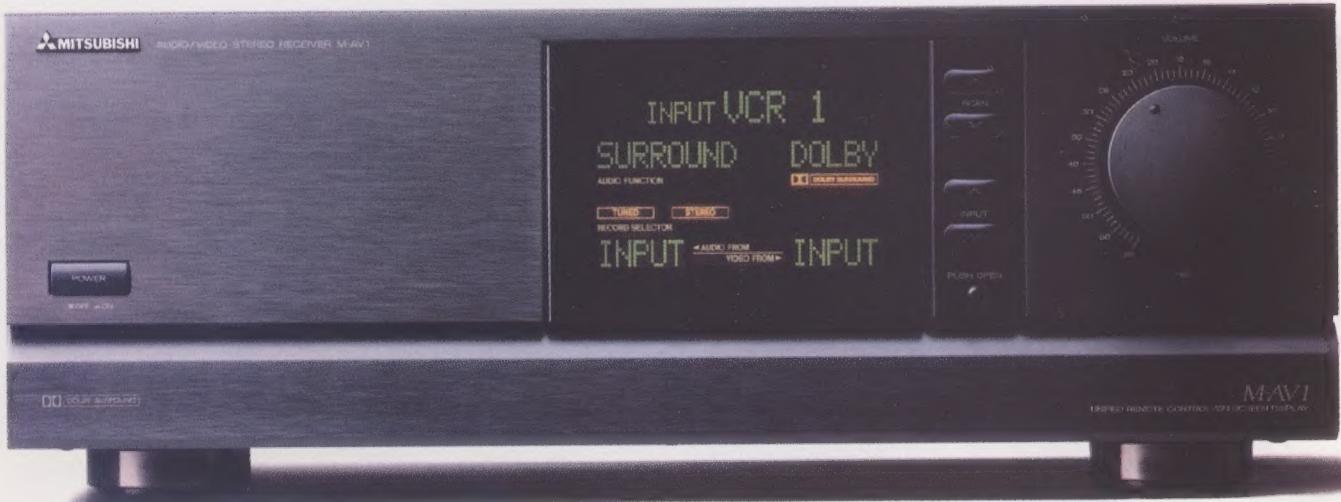


VHS DIGITAL-Hi-Fi  
VHS DIGITAL-Hi-Fi  
VHS DIGITAL-Hi-Fi  
VHS DIGITAL-Hi-Fi

70989 37869



# A video receiver designed for audiophiles.



Until now, video receivers have overlooked a distinct segment of the Nielsen population.



Those people who listen to TV as well as watch it. Which is why Mitsubishi engineers developed the M-AV1. A video receiver inspired from the philosophy that a soap opera should sound every bit as good as an Italian opera. At the heart of the system is a powerful amplifier with Dolby Surround™ sound. It boasts 125-watts per channel.\* With a generous dose of 25-watts per channel in the rear for surround sound. A time delay of 20 milliseconds has also been encoded into the rear channels to increase depth perception and maintain separation from the front speakers. And with our Dynamic Delay Line, we've expanded the dynamic range of our rear channels by as much as 40 dB over other conventional designs. It also offers four video inputs (two of which are Super-VHS compatible). And comes complete with an award-winning remote that's easy-to-use and capable of controlling all functions via on-screen displays. So you never have to get up from your recliner on our account. But now that you've got a great video receiver, as an audiophile, you might be in the market for an audio receiver. In which case read the other side of the page.

# An audio receiver designed for videophiles.



If like most people you read this ad from left to right, you know by now that the M-AV1 distinguishes itself as a superb video receiver. But what makes the M-AV1 a rare species in the A/V receiver jungle is that it also makes an equally superb audio receiver. For starters, it's so full of technical goodies that it makes the average audio receiver, much less the average A/V receiver, blush. You'll find our dual J-FET preamp provides low-noise and minimum distortion characteristics to the output amplifiers. We've utilized discrete components instead of integrated circuits for the output devices for maximum headroom and separation. Our own Multi-Feedback Servo system faithfully reproduces low frequency music with a minimum of distortion while protecting your loudspeakers from potentially damaging DC signal components. And there's also a remote-operated motorized volume control that provides smooth attenuation while avoiding distortion. Of course, if you decide you're still a hard-core videophile and only care about obtaining a great video receiver, we have a small suggestion. Buy the receiver on the other side of the page.

\*125-watts per channel minimum RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20Hz - 20kHz with no more than 0.05% total harmonic distortion. For the name of your authorized Mitsubishi dealer, call (800) 527-8888 ext. 145. © 1989 Mitsubishi Electric Sales America, Inc. Dolby Surround is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories Licensing Corp.



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# VIDEO

magazine



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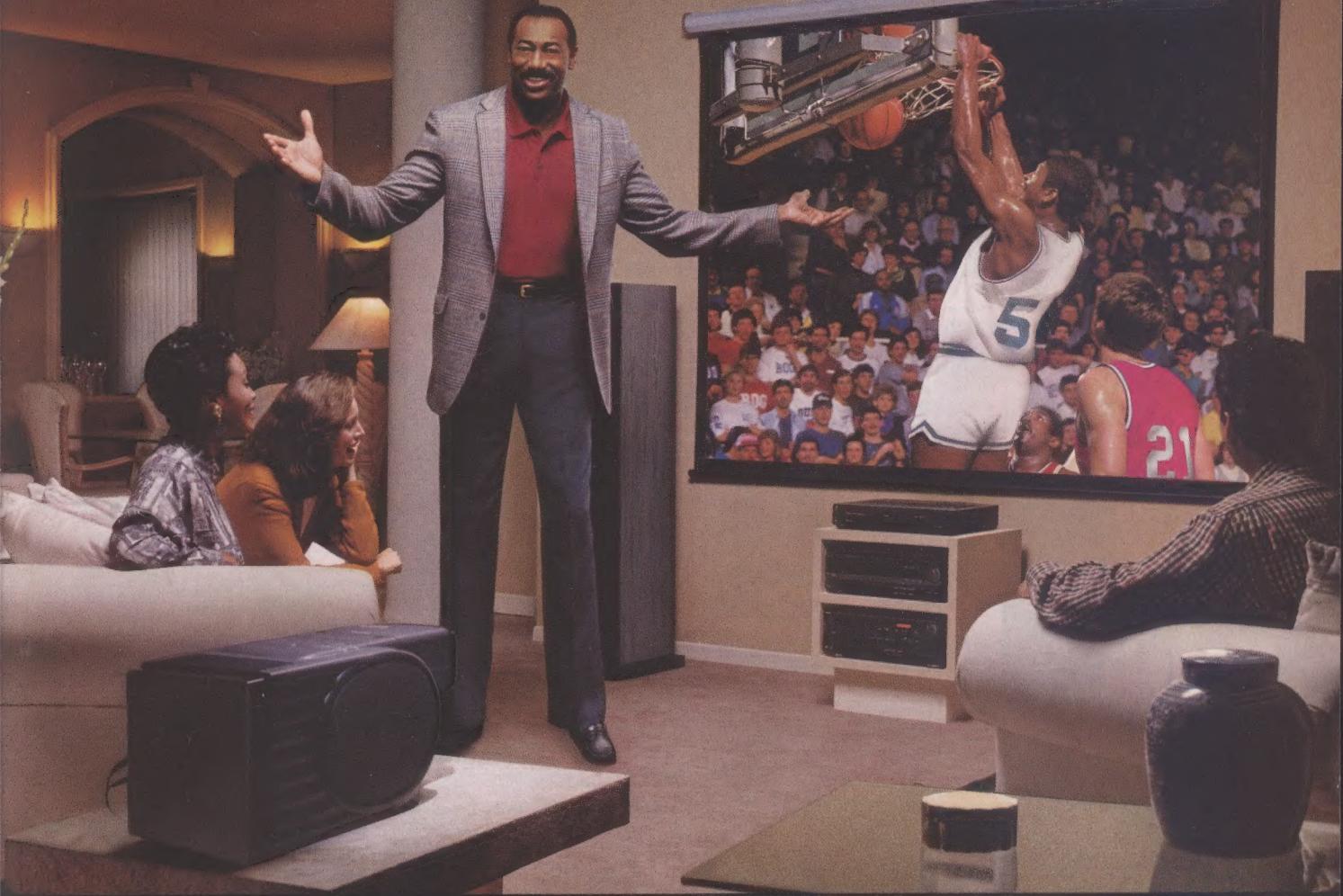
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**Cover:**  
Scaling the lofty heights of the standout gear of '89. Photography by Vittorio Sartori.

Video Magazine  
Volume XIII  
Number 10

# "DON'T JUST WATCH IT... LIVE IT."

—Wilt Chamberlain



## INTRODUCING THE ULTIMATE HOME THEATRE **SHARP VISION™**

It's big. 100" big. And it's unlike any projection system you've ever seen. SharpVision's revolutionary LCD technology brings movies, sports, video games, and TV shows to life.

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50TH ANNIVERSARY  
2941082

**BEVERLY HILLS COP II**  
4319242

**DIRTY DANCING**  
4955072

**BIG**  
3674092

**A FISH CALLED WANDA**  
3675082

TITLE	SELECTION NUMBER	TITLE	SELECTION NUMBER	TITLE	SELECTION NUMBER	TITLE	SELECTION NUMBER	TITLE	SELECTION NUMBER
SHORT CIRCUIT 2	5906042	COCKTAIL	5493032	MY STEPMOTHER IS AN ALIEN	5902082	TAP	5920062	A CRY IN THE DARK	6383042
PUNCHLINE	1994062	CROSSING DELANCEY	6371082	SEVEN BRIDES FOR SEVEN BROTHERS	2518352	IMAGINE: JOHN LENNON	6368032	ACCIDENTAL TOURIST	6386012
THE AFRICAN QUEEN	0511362	MOONSTRUCK	2716012	WUTHERING HEIGHTS	3126452	STAKEOUT	5488002	A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 4: DREAM MASTER	5713072
THE GODFATHER PART II	0018592	ON GOLDEN POND	0523572	EMPIRE OF THE SUN	6332062	THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE	2787052	LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS (1986)	6297172
EDDIE MURPHY: RAW	4392082	BEVERLY HILLS COP	2053362	THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY	7340402	BRIGADOON	2542352	THE GRAPES OF WRATH	0531572
THE LAST EMPEROR	1974002	THROW MOMMA FROM THE TRAIN	2351012	FUNNY GIRL	1511262	THE LAST UNICORN	0685022	FROM HERE TO ETERNITY	1917002
PINK FLOYD—DELICATE SOUND OF THUNDER	4627052	PLATOON	6500282	BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID	0517632	FLASHDANCE	2018222	THE GREEN BERETS	6239342
		RED HEAT	7987022	HELLO, DOLLY	0609472	CABARET	4001502	POLICE ACADEMY V	6333052
		SCARFACE (1983)	2168042	WALL STREET	3661042	CHARIOTS OF FIRE	6014432	THE BIG CHILL	1527692
		CHARLOTTE'S WEB	2095282	THE BIG CHILL	1527692	SUPERMAN II	6015182	CADDYSHACK	6023262
		OKLAHOMA!	0054392	SHOOT TO KILL	5490062	QUO VADIS	2681022	THE QUIET MAN	4032122
		ADVENTURES IN BABYSITTING	5486022	THE NATURAL	1649132	IRON EAGLE	3588202	CASABLANCA	0507572
		THE MUSIC MAN	6147012	DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS	2372062	THE LONGEST DAY	0577602	BLUE HAWAII	0673302
		CLEOPATRA	0579432	ARSENIC AND OLD LACE	0735442	JUMPIN' JACK FLASH	3627072	BODY HEAT	6020112
		PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES	4394062	SESAME STREET PRESENTS: FOLLOW THAT BIRD	6117232	FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF	4273102	ERNEST GOES TO CAMP	5484042
		CAMELOT	6027482	COUSINS	4472012	DIRTY HARRY	6017152	TRUE Grit	2028532
		PATTON	0043332	MARRIED TO THE MOB	2361092	SILVERADO	1810242	ACTION JACKSON	5191082
		BIG BUSINESS	5494022	THE PRINCESS BRIDE	1250052	M*A*S*H	0055382	THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI	1606302
		AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN	2021352	KARATE KID	1710412	GIGI	2508112	SOUTH PACIFIC	3506452
		GANDHI	1533042	ALIEN	0002812	HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS	2219032	TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD	1022282
PRIME OF MISS JEAN BRODIE	3731002	GREASE	2074312	KARATE KID II	1894152	NORTH TO ALASKA	7310262	TWINS	5810092
THE MALTESE FALCON	0508072	ROMANCING THE STONE	0894252	GIANT	6080182	CLARA'S HEART	6372072	ALIEN NATION	3698012
STAR TREK III—THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK	2016322	ALIENS	3609252	APOCALYPSE NOW	2001132	EVERYBODY'S ALL AMERICAN	6380072		
AMADEUS	6529172	TUCKER	4417092	THE STING	1005292				
STAR TREK IV—THE VOYAGE HOME	4306112	FULL METAL JACKET	6325052	THE CARE BEARS MOVIE II	1862132				
		SHORT CIRCUIT	3607192	OVERBOARD	3657002				
		COLORS	2355072	STAND BY ME	1924432				
		WEST SIDE STORY	0505912						
		BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED	6810072						
		THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK	6323072						
		PREDATOR	3649012						
		NADINE	3650072						
ANNIE	1516132	RAMBO III	7975062						
YOUNG GUNS	7266042	THE DEAD POOL	6358052						
MICHAEL JACKSON'S MOONWALKER	4686032	THE TERMINATOR	6528182						
OUT OF AFRICA	2131162	ABOVE THE LAW	6336022						
JANE FONDA'S COMPLETE WORKOUT	6359042	MIDNIGHT RUN	5286042						
THE NAKED GUN	4471022	TOOTSIE	1509122						
MISSISSIPPI BURNING	2373052	SINGIN' IN THE RAIN	2554552						
		BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE	3912012						
All movies available on VHS only									

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## OVER 300 NEW HITS AND OLD FAVORITES . . .

Just look at what's happened to the prices on video-cassettes! Contemporary hits like *Fatal Attraction* and *Dirty Dancing* have been reduced from \$89.95 to as little as \$19.95! Family favorites like *The Wizard of Oz* and *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* are selling for just \$24.95 each! And while recent hits like *Working Girl*, *Cousins* and *Rain Man* are currently selling for as much as \$89.95, chances are that their prices will be reduced eventually. So it's become easier than ever to build a library of your favorite movies—at truly affordable prices!

And the most economical way to start your movie collection, or add to it, is by joining the CBS Video Club. As a new member, you may have any 6 of the more than 300 movies shown here—all 6 for only 49¢ each, plus shipping and handling. (And you can even save up to \$70 on two more movies—see Advance Selections box in the coupon.)

There's no membership fee for joining, nor do you have to buy a lot of movies. Just six more within the next three years. And you'll have no problem in finding six movies you want, be-

cause our library holds over 2,700 titles; from the very newest releases to classical favorites. Our regular Club prices currently range from \$79.95 to \$29.95, plus shipping and handling; and we also offer a selection of lower-priced videocassettes, down to \$14.95. Your only membership obligation is to buy six movies within three years for as little as \$29.95 each—and you may cancel membership anytime after doing so.

**How the Club operates:** about every four weeks (up to 13 times a year) we send you our *CBS Video Club Magazine*, reviewing our Director's Selection, plus many alternate movies. And up to four times a year, you may also receive offers of Special Selections, usually at a discount off regular Club prices, for a total of up to 17 buying opportunities.

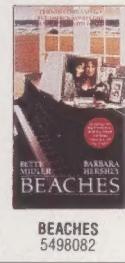
**Choose only the movies you want:** if you want the Director's Selection, don't do a thing—it'll arrive automatically. If you'd prefer an alternate movie, or none at all, just mail the card always provided by the date specified. You'll always have at least two full weeks to decide. (If you ever receive a tape before having



**WORKING GIRL**  
3722012



**MY FAIR LADY**  
3507512



**BEACHES**  
5498082

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ONLY 49¢ EACH  
PLUS 2 MORE FOR UP TO 85% OFF!**

+ plus shipping and handling, with membership

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COMING TO AMERICA	4416002	STAR WARS	0564652	BEETLEJUICE	6330082	GOOD MORNING, VIETNAM	5482062
THE ACCUSED	4418082	JAWS	1000242	HAIRSPRAY	1975092	ROBOCOP	2350022
THREE MEN AND A BABY	5491052	CAN'T BUY ME LOVE	5485032	PEE WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE	6098342	TEQUILA SUNRISE	6389082
	2114172	TERMS OF ENDEARMENT	2014262	A PASSAGE TO INDIA	1741362	THE PRINCIPAL	5908022
		THE FLY (1986)	3617332	ANGEL HEART	7956172		
		FIRST BLOOD	6503172	PORKY'S	0775602		
		SPORTS ILLUSTRATED 25TH ANNIV. SWIMSUIT VIDEO	6674022	OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE	5481072		
		STARMAN	1723202	THE JOLSON STORY	1849032		
		COMMANDO	3555372	SHE'S HAVING A BABY	4397032		
		GOLDFINGER	0539182	FRIENDLY PERSUASION	0960162		
		THE MISSION	6303012	HOLIDAY INN	1035152		
		THE BIG EASY	6559102	BILOXI BLUES	6822032		
		HATARI	4110092	MURPHY'S ROMANCE	1853482		
		D.O.A. (1988)	5489092	THE BOAT (DAS BOOT)	1520252		
		A CHORUS LINE	3193432	HOOSIERS	6550192		
		MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS	2529162	ALEXANDER THE GREAT	2762042		
		BACK TO THE FUTURE	5491052	BILL COSBY, HIMSELF	0935342		
		HEARTBREAK RIDGE	6289332	NORTH BY NORTHWEST	2509362		
DIE HARD	3676072	A ROOM WITH A VIEW	3615012	THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN	0698152	GORILLAS IN THE MIST	5804072
CROCODILE DUNDEE II	4415012	CRITICAL CONDITION	4309182	POLTERGEIST	2687142	THE SECRET OF MY SUCCESS	2222082
WITNESS	4114052	SHENANDOAH	1019232	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN ANTHOLOGY (1978-1988)	4688012	SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME	1969072
GREMLINS	6082242	THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS	3652052	A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET III	3432102	BLACK WIDOW	3630022
BRADDOCK: MISSING IN ACTION III	7250022	A SOLDIER'S STORY	1733282	RETURN OF THE JEDI	3547532	PILLOW TALK	1031272
THE RUNNING MAN	4956062	CALLANETICS	2165152	GOING MY WAY	1025092	BROADCAST NEWS	3665002
THE GLENN MILLER STORY	2130412	MILAGRO BEANFIELD WAR	6809002	JAGGED EDGE	1813542	PRINCE OF DARKNESS	2245012
CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD	4294152	THE KILLING FIELDS	6084222	POLICE ACADEMY IV	6306162	POLICE ACADEMY	6049672
NUTS	6328102	THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW	6819082	SHAKEDOWN	6821042	WAR OF THE WORLDS	2094292
POLTERGEIST III	2807012	THE RIGHT STUFF	6043142	THE KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN	3187332	ROXANNE	1960222
THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN	0534542	THE COLOR OF MONEY	5470592	THE BOY WHO COULD FLY	5146042	THE BOY WHO COULD FLY	5146042
BABY BOOM	3656012	THE SEARCHERS	6102202	G.I. BLUES	0670532	THE COTTON CLUB	310292
MANNEQUIN	3439132	STAND AND DELIVER	6337012	THE JAZZ SINGER (1980)	2069122	THE HOUSE ON CARROLL STREET	6621062
COBRA	6201202	TRADING PLACES	2017232	FATAL BEAUTY	2785072	PURPLE RAIN	6048012
SHANE	2073162	THE ROAD WARRIOR	6028392	SUPERMAN IV: THE QUEST FOR PEACE	6311012	POLICE ACADEMY	6049672
NO WAY OUT	6558112	SUPERMAN THE MOVIE	0013392	EXCALIBUR	6021022	THE COUCH TRIP	2352002
ARTHUR	6024332	PALE RIDER	6097272	RAISING ARIZONA	3634082	THE GUNS OF NAVARONE	1523222
RIKKI-TIKKI-TAVI	7908082	WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE	5601022	SUPERMAN	6524202	BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY	2792082
48 HOURS	2022262	BLADE RUNNER	3104332	THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK	0910412	YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN	0635452
2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY	0025192	SILKWOOD	3106152	BEN-HUR	2603312	TOP GUN	4269322
THE WAY WE WERE	1529262	THUNDERBALL	0709462	WILLOW	1982002	BULL DURHAM	2360002
RISKY BUSINESS	6033402	DR. NO	0554182	THE GOOFATHER	0008512		
HAMBURGER HILL	4954082	10	0011312				
JEWEL OF THE NILE	3571602	HELLO AGAIN	5487012				
THE TEN COMMANDMENTS	2026552	GHOSTBUSTERS	1742682				
LETHAL WEAPON	6308222	AN AMERICAN TAIL	2184042				



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**Advance Selections  
SAVE UP TO \$140 MORE—  
HAVE LESS TO BUY LATER!**

You may order one or two more movies now for only \$9.95 each—so you can save up to \$140! What's more, each discount purchase immediately reduces your membership obligation by one!

Also send my first selection for \$9.95 plus \$1.50 shipping/handling which I'm adding to my \$11.94 payment. I then need buy only 5 more (instead of 6) in three years. #

And also send still one more selection for an additional \$9.95 plus \$1.50 shipping/handling. I then need buy only 4 more (instead of 6) in the next 3 years. #

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594/590

The music was hot. The man was wild.  
The name was Jerry Lee Lewis...  
and he was born to  
raise hell!



DENNIS QUAID IS  
JERRY LEE LEWIS IN

# GREAT BALLS OF FIRE!

GREAT BALLS OF FIRE,  
stars the enormously  
popular Dennis Quaid—  
playing the "Killer" of  
rock 'n' roll, Jerry Lee  
Lewis, in a movie with  
a "Whole Lotta Shakin'  
Goin' On."



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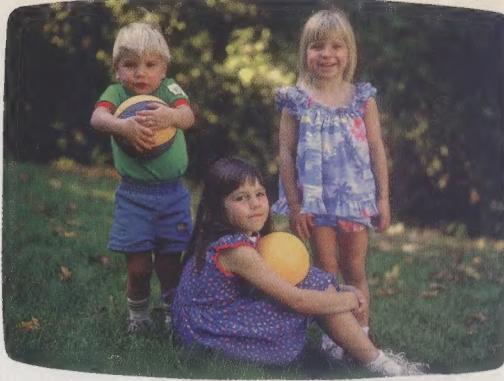
# CHANNEL ONE

## Six dreams for the '90s

With this issue, we vault into the '90s and the promise of even more exciting video products to come. One of our features this month is a reverie about the "Dream Machine for the '90s," in which we ask for 25 delightful and delectable new VCR features. But we have an even broader Video Wish List for the coming decade, one that embraces the entire video hardware and programming arena. To Wit:

- That large-screen, flat-panel television sets, with high-definition display capabilities, finally become a reality. Advanced flat-panel sets will do more to improve and streamline our video lives than anything since the cathode ray tube.
- That some of the political, economic and legal shackles holding back development of even more useful video products and concepts be loosened. The dual-deck VCR is the perfect example of a product held back for all the wrong reasons. It may sound a little naive, but in the long run everyone benefits from products that expand video's horizons.
- That studios become ever bolder in the video field, eventually releasing major titles at the same time they open theatrically. We think they'll discover that — rather than shrinking theatrical revenues — the quick video release of titles will only enhance the movie-going experience (and increase box office revenues). While they're at it, they should also begin treating video as a separate and unique product, not just an adjunct to theaters and TV. We could use a lot more original and specialized programming.
- That everyone in the vast VCR chain begin a sustained effort to elevate VHS performance levels. The best and quickest way? Do everything possible to make Super VHS the VCR standard, not the high-end exception.
- That personal video truly live up to its name. As an example, we'd like to see a camcorder (with a built-in color monitor) the size of a credit card. Can't be done? Sure it can, through creative adaptation of semiconductor memory storage techniques and some radical new approaches to optical technology. Better get busy.
- That we come up with the magic product that does for the '90s what the VCR did for the '80s. We know it's out there. It's just a matter of finding it.

Art Levis  
Editor-in-Chief



# The Way To Improve The Next Generation.

It's never been easier or less expensive to make the next generation look better. Or sound better. Vidicraft continues to provide quality audio/video accessories to improve your productions. Here are three of the best ways to make your mark on the next generation.



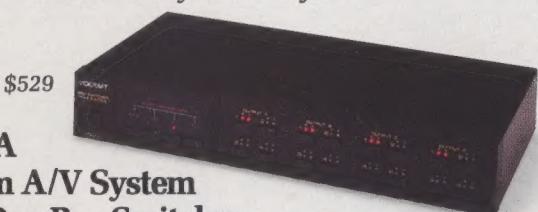
\$299

### VidiMate™ The Complete Video Production System With Audio Mixing

If you're going to buy one piece of equipment, make this it.

VidiMate sharpens and enriches videos while you compare images with our split screen feature. Enhancing video outline, detail, brightness, color and tint, VidiMate turns your home into a mini-editing suite. An automatic fade control makes professional-looking edits. Narration or background music can be added through both microphone and audio inputs. And audio mixing from two sources simultaneously is a cinch.

Looking for a way to make dubs that actually look better than the original? Or videos with everything from sound effects to professional edits? VidiMate's the system for you.



\$529

### Build A Custom A/V System With Our Pro Switcher

Quit rewiring your setup every time you want to use a different combination of equipment. Our professional Pro Switcher combines all your

audio and video components into one integrated system you can control from a single unit. It even has an RS232 computer port.

You can also connect up to four VCRs at a time for multiple copying. There's no perceptible distortion or crosstalk. And, if you're looking for ways to improve the next generation on simulcasts, the Pro Switcher lets you take the stereo signal from your FM tuner and the video signal from your TV and make a true stereo recording on your VCR.



\$69

### Open Your Own Sound Studio With SoundsRight™

Give your videos a real soundtrack. With SoundsRight, you can easily add narration or background music to your videos from up to three sources—stereo or mono.

SoundsRight also includes an Auto Fade feature that automatically fades picture and sound. It makes producing better-looking and better-sounding videos easy. And it can also be used for your audio tapes.

SoundsRight includes its own unidirectional dynamic microphone.

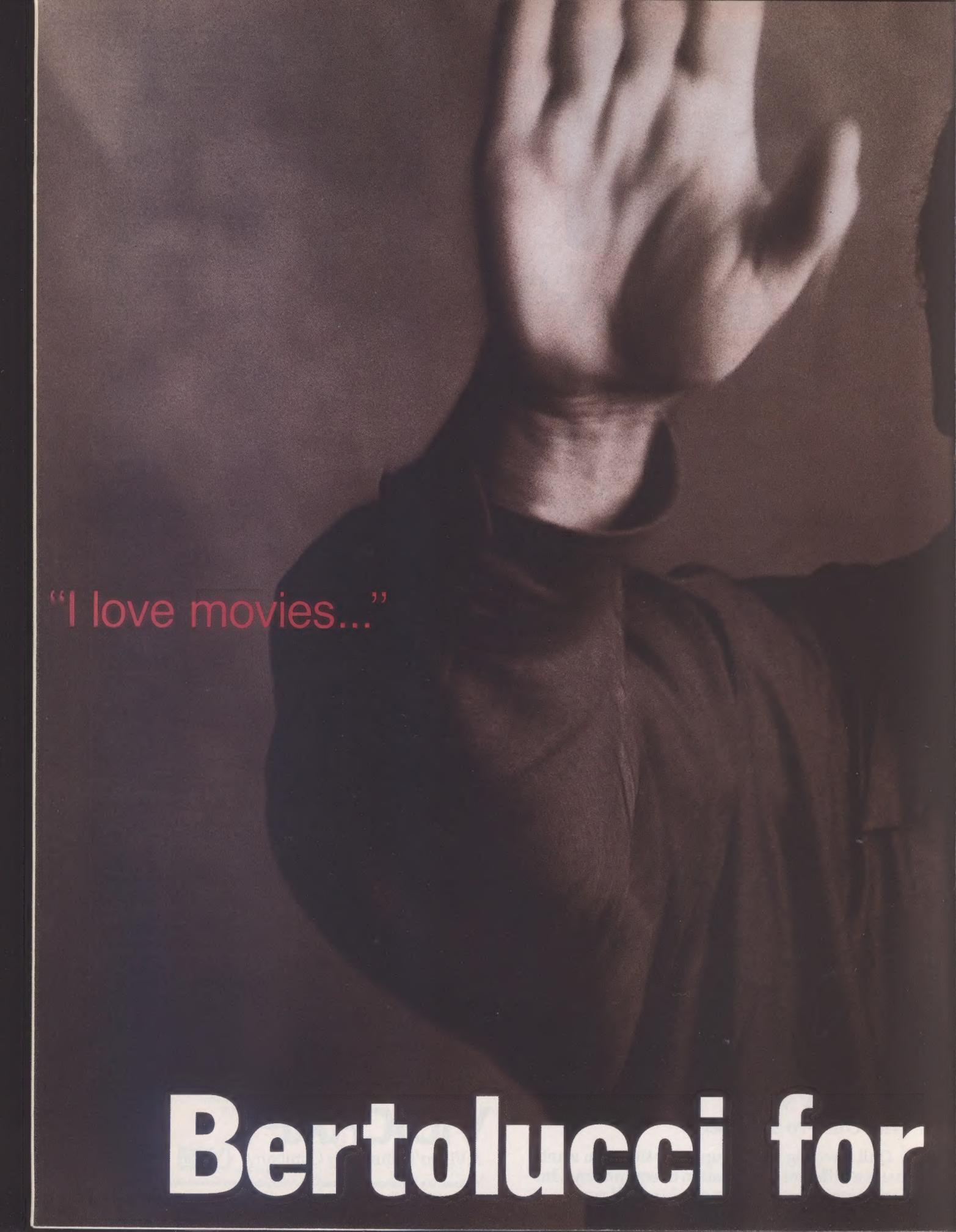
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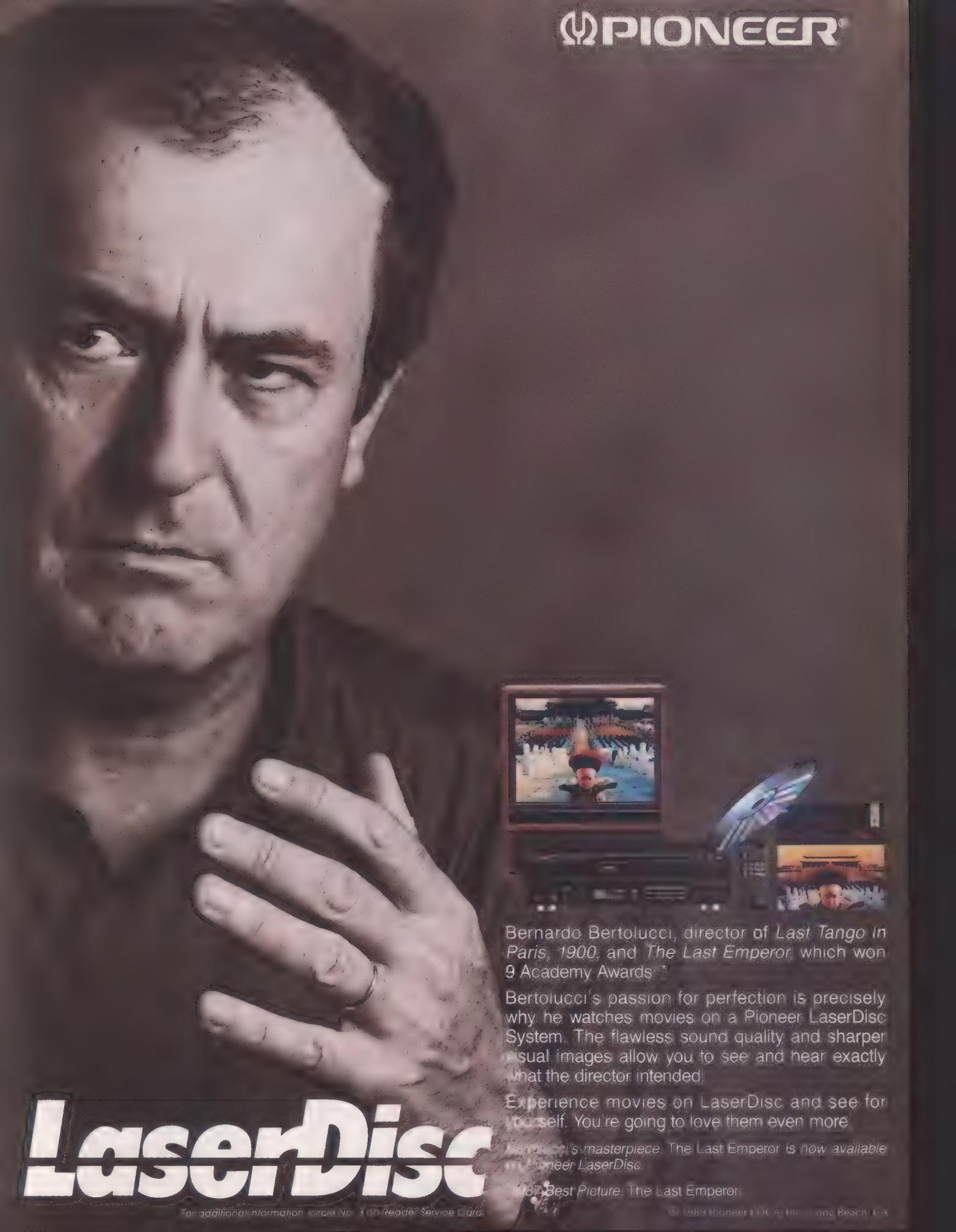


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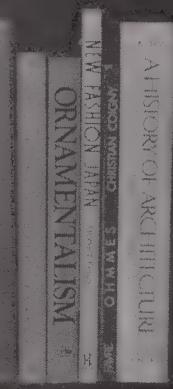
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EDITED BY BRIAN CLARK

# FEEDBACK

### *Waiting for Batman*

What's wrong with Warner, Touchstone and Disney Home Video? No *Batman*, *Bambi* or *Roger Rabbit* on laserdisc until sometime in early 1990! Just when it seemed the videodisc had turned the corner with the simultaneous release of *Rain Man* on tape and disc comes news that the major releases of 1989 won't be available until this year. The videodisc will never be a success until studios recognize that videodisc owners want to own new titles now, not three to four months later. This lack of respect for videodisc owners hurts the growth of the videodisc market.

Jerry Valladares  
New Orleans, La.



**Class Clown:** Jack Nicholson's Joker made the jump from theaters to cassette in 1989 but not to videodisc.

to find out which answer was correct!

When a VCR is used mainly for time-shifting, good battery backup is essential. Manufacturers should list battery backup with the other specs and *Video Magazine* should include it in all reviews.

Vanessa N. Hanko  
Geneva-on-the-Lake, Ohio

*Editor's Note: Look for a report on the subject in an upcoming "Technically Speaking."*

### *Out of focus*

I was impressed by your "Videotest" of Sony's CCD-V99 camcorder (May '89), but was horrified to read that it employed through-the-lens autofocus rather than the infrared focus used on most previous Sony models. Under most conditions the TTL system locks into a fruitless hunting mode even on still shots. It is also slow to respond to changes in distance, especially with the telephoto engaged. Sony's use here of TTL focusing is false economy. It is said to be light, compact and cheap to produce, but it is also unreliable.

Vic Rizzo  
Queensland, Australia  
*continued on page 34*

*Video Magazine welcomes your comments. Please include a phone number, but not a return envelope as the volume of mail does not permit replies. Letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address correspondence to Feedback, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.*

# TOKINA

## Lightens

1.8x teleconverter is only 1.5" long and weighs just 3.4 oz. Half the width and half the weight of the competition. In addition to ease-of-handling, compact size means less weight and strain on the camcorder focusing mechanism.



## Doubles



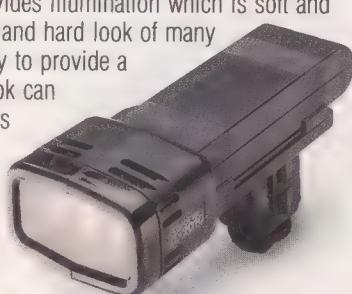
The fleeting look on a child's face becomes twice as much fun, and all images become much more enjoyable when Tokina doubles the magnification of the camcorder lens. The Tokina VC-20, 2.0x telephoto lens is just 1.7" long and weighs only 5.3 oz.

## Enlightens



The Tokina 3-intensity light provides illumination which is soft and wide, as opposed to the narrow and hard look of many camcorder lights. Tokina's ability to provide a more attractive, more natural look can be seen particularly in the details around the face and eyes.

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## Widens



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## Sharpens



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EDITED BY STAN PINKWAS

# LATE NEWS

## Serious toys

It's often said that the difference between men and boys is the price of their toys, but would anyone have ever expected the maxim to apply to Nintendo? The videogame giant is getting into the financial services business with Fidelity Investment, a Boston-based brokerage house. Nintendo will develop a controller and a modem that plug into its ubiquitous game system, while Fidelity takes care of financial software cartridges. Nintendo already offers a similar product in Japan. Said Nintendo president Hiroshi Yamauchi: "No toy company ever became a big company by remaining a toy company."

## Phosphor feud

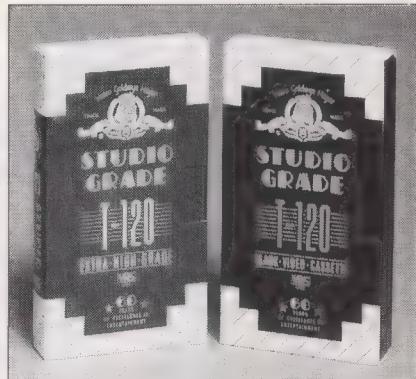
Mitsubishi's much anticipated 70-inch projection TV — the largest consumer rear-screen set to be marketed — is on hold for the time being. The giant television, along with a brighter version of an older 60-inch model, is the subject of a patent complaint by Philips. The problem appears to be that Mitsubishi's Multi-Interference Coating — which reflects more light to the phosphors that layer the inside of a cathode ray tube — may infringe on a coating process developed by Philips to do much the same job.

## A Southern strategy for HDTV

High-definition broadcasts, still years away for most of us, may become reality for some Southern viewers within months. The Club Theatre Network of Boca Raton, Florida, says it will open a chain of HDTV movie theaters in condominium complexes, hotels and country clubs this year. The system uses a new high-definition telecine converter by Rank Cintel to transfer movies to video. A BellSouth optical fiber network will handle the transmission.

## Gilt by association

Blank tapes are edging away from, well, the blank image most people confront



**Roaring Nineties:** MGM Lion brand video and audio tapes signal a trend toward sales-by-association.

when they consider which brand to buy. Manufacturers need memorable identities. For example, the 3M Company's All My Soaps cassettes will soon be joined by American Electronics & Entertainment's new line of MGM Lion brand video and audio tapes. Scotch is also considering a tony Black Watch line of blanks, although there's no decision yet to produce them.

## Fast Scans

**Quake Aid:** When San Francisco shakes, Tokyo listens. Matsushita Electric Industrial Company, heading a lengthy list of Japanese donors, contributed \$1 million to help San Francisco's victims get back on their feet.

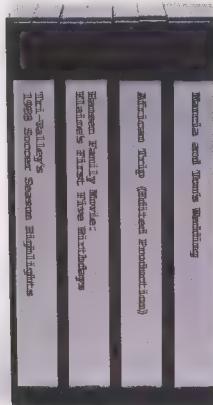
**Choosing Sides:** Sharp has introduced a midprice VHS VCR for sale in Japan that can be used either horizontally or vertically.

**Quantum Shifts:** What do people do with VCRs most of the time? Half watch pre-recorded films, according to a new survey by the Electronics Industries Association, while 27 percent timeshift cable shows and 20 percent tape network programs. Only three percent spend the bulk of their VCR time editing footage and watching homemade videos.

**Code Carrier:** The National Captioning Institute and ITT have begun development of a caption-decoding microchip. NCI hopes the chip will make it possible for midprice VCRs and TV sets to offer a caption-decoding feature by mid-decade.



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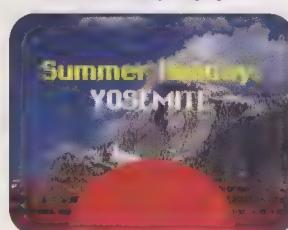
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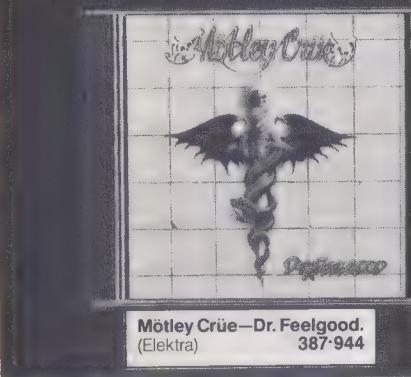
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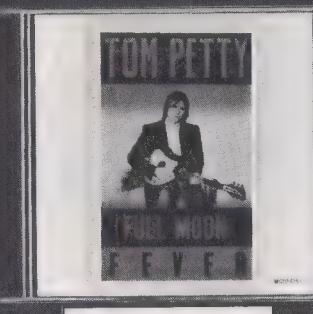
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**Elton John**—Greatest Hits  
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**Creedence Clearwater  
Revival**—20 Greatest Hits  
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**The Best Of Emerson,  
Lake & Palmer** (Atlantic)  
306-969

**Electric Light Orchestra**  
—Greatest Hits (Jet)  
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**Joe Cocker**—Greatest  
Hits (A&M) 320-911

**Melissa Etheridge** (Island)  
371-468

**When Harry Met Sally—  
Original Soundtrack**  
(Columbia) 386-821

**Richard Marx**—Repeat  
Offender (EMI) 380-915

**Fine Young Cannibals**—  
The Raw And The Cooked  
(I.R.S.) 379-214

**Martika** (Columbia)  
379-149

**Cyndi Lauper**—A Night To  
Remember (Epic) 377-887

**Jackson Browne**—The  
Pretender (Asylum)  
292-243

**The Band**—The Last  
Waltz (Warner Bros.)  
291-948/391-946

**Best Of The Grateful  
Dead** (Warner Bros.)  
291-633

**Led Zeppelin IV** (Atlantic)  
291-435

**James Taylor**—Greatest  
Hits (Warner Bros.) 291-302

**Best Of The Doobie Bros.**  
(Warner Bros.) 291-278

**Eagles**—Greatest Hits  
1971-1975 (Asylum)  
287-003

**Linda Ronstadt**—  
Greatest Hits (Asylum)  
286-740

**Jim Croce**—Photographs  
& Memories: His Greatest  
Hits (Saja) 246-868

**Santana**—Greatest Hits  
(Columbia) 244-459

**Janis Joplin**—Greatest  
Hits (Columbia) 231-670

**Simon & Garfunkel**—  
Greatest Hits (Columbia)  
219-477

**Blood, Sweat & Tears**—  
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**Sly & The Family Stone**—  
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Both Ways (Epic) 382-341

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Gadda-Da-Vida (ATCO)  
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**Soul II Soul**—Keep On  
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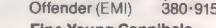
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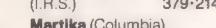
**Aerosmith**—Pump  
(Geffen) 388-009



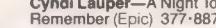
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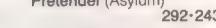
**Richard Marx**—Repeat  
Offender (EMI) 380-915



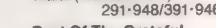
**Fine Young Cannibals**—  
The Raw And The Cooked  
(I.R.S.) 379-214



**Martika** (Columbia)  
379-149



**Cyndi Lauper**—A Night To  
Remember (Epic) 377-887



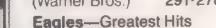
**Jackson Browne**—The  
Pretender (Asylum)  
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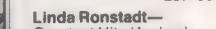
**The Band**—The Last  
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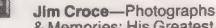
**Best Of The Grateful  
Dead** (Warner Bros.)  
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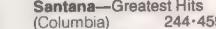
**Led Zeppelin IV** (Atlantic)  
291-435



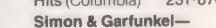
**James Taylor**—Greatest  
Hits (Warner Bros.) 291-302



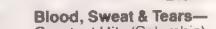
**Best Of The Doobie Bros.**  
(Warner Bros.) 291-278



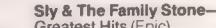
**Eagles**—Greatest Hits  
1971-1975 (Asylum)  
287-003



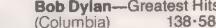
**Linda Ronstadt**—  
Greatest Hits (Asylum)  
286-740



**Jim Croce**—Photographs  
& Memories: His Greatest  
Hits (Saja) 246-868

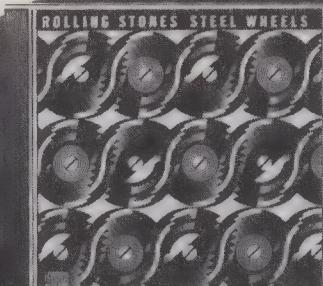


**Santana**—Greatest Hits  
(Columbia) 244-459





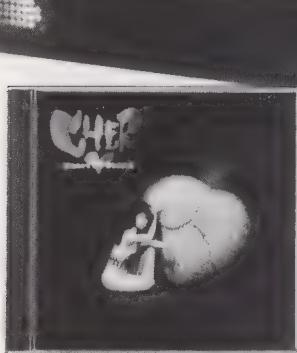
Billy Joel—Storm Front.  
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Milli Vanilli—Girl You Know  
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Barbra Streisand, Babyface,  
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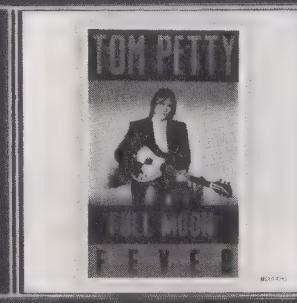
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**Randy Travis—**No Holdin'  
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389-767

**Big Daddy Kane—**It's A  
Big Daddy Thing  
(Cold Chillin') 389-460

**Molly Hatchet—**Lightning  
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**Brahms: Violin Concerto;**  
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Nadia Salerno-Sonnenberg; Edo De  
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Orch. (Angel) 400-135

**The D.O.C.—**No One Can  
Do It Better (Ruthless)  
389-155

**The Isley Brothers—**  
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(Warner Bros.) 389-148

**Maze—**Silky Soul  
(Warner Bros.) 389-098

**Ozzy Osbourne Live**  
(CBS Associated) 401-265

**Kate Bush—**The Sensual  
World (Columbia) 401-232

**Bros—**The Time (Epic)  
400-895

**Jonathan Richman**  
(Rounder) 400-861

**Jane Siberry—**Bound By  
The Beauty (Reprise)  
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**Reba McEntire—**Live  
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**The Psychedelic Furs—**  
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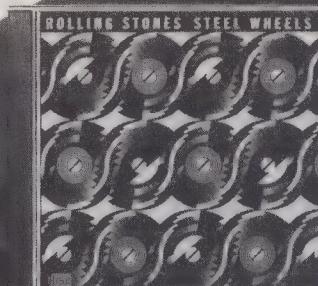
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# GAZETTE



## James Cameron's breathtaking film stunts

Few movies can lay claim to anything truly original—it seems that almost everything has been done at one time or another. But writer/director James Cameron's *The Abyss* includes at least two unprecedented scenes. One has Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio escaping a flooding submarine by letting herself drown. (She hopes to be carried to an underwater work station where she might be revived.) The other features a rat that breathes liquid.

The former was constructed with typical movie magic. But the latter, says Cameron, was absolutely real.

"It's not widely known," says the director and science buff, "but research has been done for the past 20 years or so on mammals breathing liquid." Cameron learned of it from an educational film he saw in high school. At the crux of the research is an oxygenated fluorocarbon solution.

"We got the solution from the 3M Corporation, oxygenated it, heated it to the body temperature of the rat and immersed the rat in the solution," he explains. "The rat breathed the liquid for three minutes, then we drained its lungs. We put it back in its cage, warmed it up and it was okay."

This scene foreshadows another in which Ed Harris, playing a futuristic deep-sea diver, has to breathe liquid. Harris' scene was simulated, but many of the film's dangerous underwater stunts were performed by the actors themselves—against their wishes, if not their wills. Harris has railed to the press about Cameron pressuring actors to do risky stunts under harrowing conditions.

"Reports of our deaths are greatly exaggerated," replies Cameron, who dismisses Harris' claims and says there were no injuries during the 140 days of shooting. "I told all the actors when I cast them they were probably gonna die," he says. "It didn't deter them at the time." Of course, they probably thought Cameron was kidding. "Yeah, well," Cameron deadpans, "they found out I wasn't."

—Frank Lovece

**Water Sports:**  
Ed Harris and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio performed many of their own stunts in deep-sea epic *The Abyss*.

## Video thrilled the radio star

When Howard Stern talks, people listen. Through his inimitable New York-based radio show (now syndicated to stations in the Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., areas) and numerous appearances on such television mainstays as *Late Night with David Letterman* and *The Hollywood Squares*, Stern has solidified his reputation as one of radio's original bad boys while creating an ever-growing legion of insatiable Sternaholics. After almost single-handedly revitalizing the talk radio genre, what's left to do for The Outspoken One?

"I'm really psyched," Stern says, referring to his latest creation—a no-holds-barred video-cassette entitled

*Howard Stern's U.S. Open Sores*. Featured are scenes from Stern's recent sold-out engagement at Long Island's 16,000-seat Nassau Coliseum, with comedians Sam Kinneson, "Grandpa" Al Lewis (of *Munsters* fame) and Jackie Martling, plus rock journeyman Leslie West and victim-turned-vixen Jessica Hahn.

"The video includes a montage of everything that goes on in our show," Stern says. "We put it together in a manner that's nutty and quick-moving. It's like a Fellini movie." Akin to early *Firesign Theater* in tone and approach, Stern's live show lampoons celebrities from Zsa Zsa Gabor to Kurt Waldheim Jr., while presenting such wholly unique events as oil wrestling and tennis matches with nude ball girls.

*Open Sores* also includes studio footage of Stern letting loose for his morning broadcasts. "Everybody asks me, 'Is the stuff that goes on for real?' I say, 'You can't make that kind of thing up.' This video proves it."



Howard Stern in  
*U.S. Open Sores*

Never one to shy away from a challenge, Stern has bypassed the usual channels in marketing *Open Sores*. The cassette is available only by dialing 1-800-52-STERN or by sending \$29.95 (plus \$4 shipping and applicable sales tax) to Howard Stern Video, Box JAF #2900, New York, NY 10116. Video may never be the same again.

—Clifford Meth

## David Brenner bites the bullet

Comedian David Brenner's belief that exercise isn't fun—but that exercise tapes can be funny—provided all the inspiration he needed to create the new "I Hate to Work Out!" Workout video-cassette.

"I exercise all the time," Brenner says, "but I hate it—it's insulting to everything I believe in. If someone said

continued on page 26

**No Pain, No Gain:**  
David Brenner  
buckles down for  
the "I Hate to Work  
Out" Workout.



## Video Flashes



**Bridging a Gap.** Looking for a quick \$150,000? All you have to do is figure out how to unsnarl traffic on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, a notorious bottleneck that feeds (or hinders) commuter traffic into the nation's capital. The federal competition to find an answer is unusual enough, but the best thing about it may be that puzzle fiends, and traffic planners, can work from a unique video showing the bridge from a plane, a car and a boat. "The tape gives you a feel for how awful it really is," warns contest chairman Jock Freedman.

**Wherever I Hang My Hat.** Do you miss the amenities of home when on the road? Even when staying at a luxury resort or a rented condominium? A new interactive cable television/telephone system from Twixtel Technologies may bring you one step closer to your comfort zone. Using a major credit card, you can access premium cable TV services (such as HBO and The Movie Channel) on a pay-per-stay basis, as well as pay-per-view movies and special events, from any room equipped with the Twixtel system. Also available are direct dialing and credit card billing (at AT&T rates) of long distance phone calls, plus unlimited local calls and one-touch access to local services and information. Expect to see Twixtel wherever people stay on a non-permanent basis: Hospitals, college campuses and military installations are among the likely candidates.

**Thanks, I'll Eat It Here.** The VCR has certainly influenced societal patterns over the past decade (rising couch potatoism, porno's popularity, etc.). But one influential journal is now blaming it for the restaurant industry's current malaise. A recent issue of *Forbes* magazine says technology—in the form of VCRs and microwave ovens—has contributed to sagging restaurant sales by spawning a new generation of shut-ins. Maybe *Forbes* is right. After all, the same issue's lead cover line was certainly an accurate presage of things to come. The line? *Why California's Housing Market Is About To Tumble.*

**Gathering of Tribes.** JVC, whose usual business is bringing over exotic video components, is about to import a collection of exotic videos. With the help of the Smithsonian Institution and Folkways Records, it's preparing an English-language version of the award-winning *Anthology of Music and Dance*, which Japan's National Museum of Ethnology spent five years assembling. The extraordinary 30-volume collection displays over 500 folk performances from more than 100 countries. JVC expects the tapes to be ready this spring, accompanied by detailed descriptions and background essays.

**News on the March.** India, land of the world's busiest movie studios, is also home to a unique form of video. Viewers tired of state-run television news programs can turn to *Newstrack*, a privately produced monthly cassette that covers business, politics, sports and the arts. The show reaches almost 3 million people.

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# SONY



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# GAZETTE

"I'll give you \$50 to lift these two heavy things up and down for 20 minutes," you'd say, "Forget it—I won't do it for \$500!" But the next thing you know, you're paying some guy by the hour to help you work out. You know you have to or eventually you'll fall apart."

Brenner was working with his personal fitness trainer when the idea for the cassette hit him. "I never understood why people were smiling on these workout tapes," he says. "Are they idiots? I said, 'Why doesn't someone do an honest tape and show how much they hate it? And everyone's so serious—they should have some fun!'" After weeks of saying that, it dawned on me: I was the right man for the job."

—Clifford Meth

## The people's choice on tape

Who says viewers have no say in what's released on tape? MGM/UA Home Video enlisted film critics across the country to narrow a list of 80 previously unavailable titles down to 25, then asked the readers of *Video Magazine*, *Premiere* and *US* to select ten of these



**Starry Night:** Kirk Douglas as a driven Vincent van Gogh in Vincent Minnelli's 1956 *Lust for Life*.

movies for release on cassette. The results illustrate the value of home video democracy.

Among the winners are John Huston's *Moulin Rouge* (1952), featuring Jose Ferrer's Oscar-nominated performance as painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and a pre-conviction Zsa Zsa Gabor; *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1932), with 17 minutes of previously censored footage; and *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), widely recognized as the first feature film with a rock'n'roll soundtrack.

Rounding out the top ten are Stanley Kubrick's *The Killing* (1956), Marlon Brando in *Julius Caesar* (1953), Kirk Douglas and Anthony Quinn in *Lust for Life* (1956), Paul Newman in *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1962), Spencer Tracy in *Boys Town* (1938), Jack Lemmon in *How to Murder Your Wife* (1965) and Robert Stevenson's *King Solomon's Mines* (1950). All the cassettes are available now for \$19.95 each.

—Brian Clark

## Yes, we have no commercials

As directors cheered and broadcasters jeered, an Italian court ruled that private TV companies cannot interrupt televised movies with commercials. To do so, said the judge, violates a director's rights by altering the film's "identity." *Serafino*, a mild-mannered romance directed by the late Pietro Germi, prompted the precedent-setting decision. Germi's son was so offended by the numerous commercials inserted by Canale 5 into a broadcast of *Serafino* that he sued. However, the impact of Germi's victory may be limited, since it applies only to *Serafino*. —Stan Pinkwas

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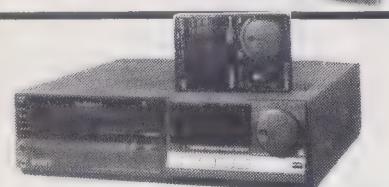
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## NEW PRODUCTS



### JVC camcorder has full-range autofocus

JVC's GR-A1U Compact VHS camcorder includes an autofocus system that focuses at any point from 0.6-inch to infinity. An automatic loading function readies the camcorder for use once a cassette is inserted. Through-the-lens automatic white balance and auto iris determine proper color balance and exposure.

The camcorder's 360,000-pixel CCD image sensor records in light as low as 8 lux. A retake function allows fast access to any point on a tape to re-record unsatisfactory footage. Other features are a 1/1000-second shutter, a 6x power zoom lens, electronic tracking controls, a flying erase head and a viewfinder that tilts through 90 degrees. The camcorder weighs 2.5 pounds.

**Price:** \$999.

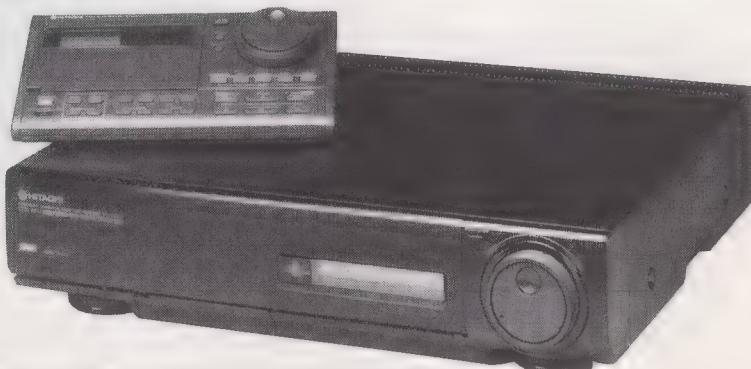
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### Hitachi introduces high-end VCR

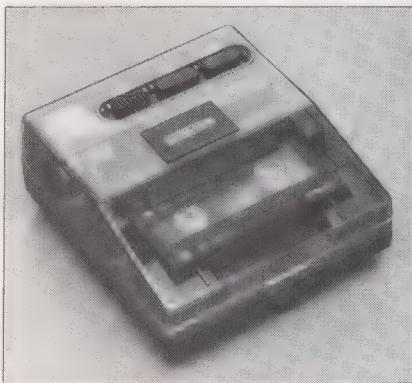
Hitachi's VT-S730A Super VHS hi-fi VCR includes a flying erase head, a jog/shuttle dial, a quick-loading tape transport, title and date recording, a 181-channel frequency synthesis tuner and a synchro edit function. Its Video Brain remote can be used to control two Hitachi VCRs as well as ten different late-model TVs from various manufacturers.

The S730A also features digital auto tracking, an MTS decoder, two-speed visual search, an eight-event/one-year timer, audio/video dubbing, frame advance, auto rewind and a 30-minute memory backup.

**Price:** \$1,199.95.



For additional information, circle No. 154 on Reader Service Card.



## *Lenmar introduces two-way 8mm winder*

Lenmar's XP8UL 8mm video winder features fast forward and rewind functions for reduced wear of VCR and camcorder heads. A digital counter lets you find selected points on a tape. A sensor helps protect against tape damage while the winder is in use.

**Price:** \$64.95.

For additional information, circle no. 155 on Reader Service Card.

## *GE camcorder includes 10-watt light*

General Electric's CG-9911 VHS camcorder comes with a 10-watt color enhancement light for optimum picture brightness when shooting indoors. Featured are an f/1.4 lens with macro and 8x power zoom, plus a CCD image sensor that records in light as low as 3 lux. Its high-speed shutter goes up to 1/1000 of a second. The 9911 also has a flying erase head, auto iris, audio and video dub, a self-timer, time lapse recording, an automatic clock/calendar, index recording, synchro edit, record review, a backlight switch and an elapsed time/time remaining display.

**Price:** \$1,299.

For additional information, circle No. 156 on Reader Service Card.

## *Wireless headphones work with any TV*



Arkon's IR-200 Infrasound wireless stereo headphone system includes a microphone adapter for older TV sets that don't have headphone jacks. An AC-powered infrared transmitter plugs into the headphone jack of newer TV sets or audio/video components. Lightweight cushioned earpads offer added comfort. The headphones' built-in on/off and volume controls allow adjustment at a distance. Mono and synthesized stereo modes are available. Frequency response is 30 to 18,000 Hertz. The infrared signals can be received over a 250 square-foot range.

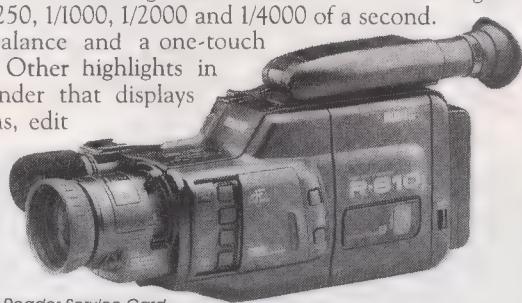
**Price:** \$79.95.

For additional information, circle No. 157 on Reader Service Card.

## *Ricoh camcorder records in 3 lux light*

Ricoh's R-810 8mm camcorder features a f/1.4 8x power zoom lens with macro. Its 270,000-pixel CCD image sensor records in light as low as 3 lux and has high-speed shutter settings of 1/100, 1/250, 1/1000, 1/2000 and 1/4000 of a second. Autofocus, automatic white balance and a one-touch backlight control are standard. Other highlights include a tilting electronic viewfinder that displays all the vital operating functions, edit search, a zero memory function date and time recording, a remote control jack and an auxiliary microphone jack.

**Price:** \$1,299.



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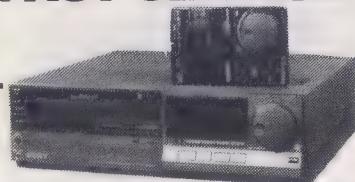
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## NEW PRODUCTS



### Azden editor stores up to 200 edit cuts

Azden's VE-100 Video Editor stores up to 200 cuts in memory at a time. A still step edit function offers accuracy of up to three frames when used with a four-head VCR. Audio mixing capabilities include fade in and out. The VE-100 can be used with any VCR that has an infrared wireless remote.

**Price:** \$449.95.

For additional information, circle No. 159 on Reader Service Card.

### RCA television has surround sound

RCA's 52-inch P52000T rear projection monitor/receiver includes 10-watt-per-channel amplifiers, a surround sound decoder and a 16-jack monitor panel with S-VHS connectors. Displayed are 1,300 square inches of viewable picture. A 71-button remote can be used to operate most VCRs and cable converters. Codes for 49 brands of VCRs and 24 brands of cable converters are programmed into the remote.

Other highlights are onscreen menus for a variety of picture and sound adjustments, channel captioning, a parental control function, an alarm/sleep timer, auto programming and commercial skip.

**Price:** \$2,999.



For additional information, circle No. 160 on Reader Service Card.

### Laserdisc platform reduces vibration

Mission's Isoplat platform for videodisc and CD players absorbs vibrations that can impair tracking and cause audio distortion. It isolates a player from both furniture- and equipment-generated vibrations. The platform is made of medium-density fiber and has rubberlike Sorbothane feet. It can be used with any audio or video component.

**Price:** \$79.



For additional information, circle No. 161 on Reader Service Card.



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PRIDE AND PREJUDICE (1940)	860162
THE CHIPMUNK ADVENTURE	♦ 861326
MAO MAX BEYOND THUNDERDOME	♦ 861350
THE AFRICAN QUEEN	550004
THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS	♦ 866606
THE GAUNTLET	862266
IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (B&W)	†862274
DR. NO	♦ 863470
THE GREAT ESCAPE	♦ 863526
THE NUTCRACKER (1977)	864304
EAST OF EDEN	864466
SINGIN' IN THE RAIN	♦ 864570
NATIONAL LAMPOON'S ANIMAL HOUSE	864626
CRY FREEDOM	864714
PALE RIDER	♦ 865566
MONKEY SHINES	♦ 865670
CANT BUY ME LOVE	♦ 866674
HOPE AND GLORY	♦ 867026
SOPHIE'S CHOICE	867276
FULL METAL JACKET	♦ 867364
COCOON: THE RETURN	950338
CHARIOTS OF FIRE	950602
ALIENS	♦ 950964
F/X	♦ 950972
THE FLY (1986)	♦ 950980
A FISH CALLED WANDA	♦ 951910
NATIONAL LAMPOON'S VACATION	952048
LEVATHAN	♦ 952128
SIXTEEN CANDLES	952546
LOVE ME TENDER	953172
COCOON	♦ 955042
GREYSTOKE: THE LEGEND OF TARZAN, LORD OF THE APES	♦ 957306
THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN	957322
HEIDI (1937)	♦ 957680
JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR	957716
ROBOCOP	♦ 250862
THE DARK CRYSTAL	563740
THE TERMINATOR	†263674
THROW MOMMA FROM THE TRAIN	♦ 450864

†Available in VHS only.

♦ Closed-captioned for the hearing impaired.

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NOTE: Time-Life Home Video Club reserves the right to reject any application or cancel any membership. Offer limited to continental U.S. (excluding Alaska).

1/90

V481-1

## FEEDBACK

continued from page 14

### 3-D the hard way

Reader Christopher Mohr is incorrect to suggest that the Nuoptix 3-D system yields only flat foreground objects when

they move in front of a flat background. A three-dimensional object moving past a panning video camera does not simply seem to shift with respect to the background. It is also captured progressively from different angles.

Imagine someone standing near a rail line, panning a video camera past a moving flatcar carrying a signboard facing down the tracks. As the flatcar approaches, the front of the sign is seen,

then the edge (as the flatcar passes the photographer), then, as the train moves away, the back. If another photographer snapped the shutter of a stereo still camera at the instant the sign appeared to be perpendicular, the right lens view would show an oblique view of the front of the sign, and the left lens an oblique view of the back — roughly the same stereo pair captured on tape by the video camera.

Thus, when the relative velocities of a camera and a 3-D object are correct and the camera-to-object distance is reasonably close, adjacent video frames may approximate stereo pairs. The single-channel time delay ("created" by a neutral density filter placed over one eye) shows the brain successive stereo pairs which, via the Pulfrich effect, are combined to yield 3-D images. What does vary is the quality of the 3-D images different "eye-brain" systems see. Many viewers do indeed see superb 3-D with well-rounded images. Otherwise, Nuoptix would have been accused of fraud. Some in the audience, however, see very little 3-D effect.

L. Robert Morris  
Carleton University  
Ottawa, Canada

# Arkon Camcharger Recharges Camcorder Batteries on the Road

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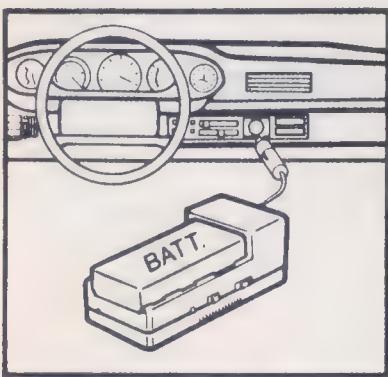
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**O**nly optional UL listed AC Power Supply (model CL514) is available if you want your CAMCHARGER to function as a regular AC sourced battery charger.

**W**ith a CAMCHARGER Mobile Camcorder Battery Charger there is no more "down time" looking for an AC outlet. Buy a CAMCHARGER today and set your camcorder free.



As a mobile battery charger.



As a mobile power supply.

For additional information, circle No. 18 on Reader Service Card.

### Double your pleasure

My Canon VR-HF800 VHS VCR has an excellent feature that allows me to view tapes at twice normal speed with comprehensible audio. I find it especially useful for watching certain films, football games and news programs. For example, I can watch *60 Minutes* in less than 30 minutes. I encourage you to mention this feature whenever you review a VCR that has it.

James J. Carter Jr.  
Baton Rouge, La.

### Digital letdown

I'd like to add my comments to those of David D'Costa ("Feedback," Nov. '89) as I too got caught up in the hype over improved-definition TV. Having paid well over a kilobuck for the Philips IDTV set, I rushed home to view this technical marvel only to encounter a problem I call digital breakup, which occurs when objects on the screen move. It was so disturbing that I returned the set the next day. When I tried to obtain a demo of Toshiba's IDTV, the distributor informed my dealer that the set is not available. Could Toshiba be aware of this problem? Has IDTV been sold to the public before its problems have been solved?

E. Webster  
Las Vegas, Nev.

## **Sending the wrong signal**

The September letter from Pete Dobulis was far more misleading than the article by Robert Angus ("Satellite TV's New Landscape," July '89). Although the Videocipher II is not the only encryption system in use, it is considered the de facto standard for the satellite industry.

The OAK Orion encryption system is used primarily for broadcasts on the Canadian ANIK satellites. Programs encrypted with it are not authorized for U.S. reception. The second user of the Orion system is the Hospital Satellite Network, the transmissions of which are intended for medical professionals and not available to consumers.

The Videocipher I is used by the CBS TV network to encrypt some of its programming. The decryption device for these programs is not available to consumers. The B-MAC system is used by the American Forces Radio and Television Service. Its broadcasts are solely for U.S. personnel stationed overseas. Its programs and the decoder are not available to consumers.

For all practical purposes, the only decoder required today is a Videocipher II. Viewers do not need a mountain of decoders to enjoy the tremendous variety of offerings by satellite.

Wally Frank  
Upper Marlboro, Md.

## **Stereo sound off**

It was with considerable pleasure that I read Mark Fleischmann's article "Now Hear This" (Nov. '89). Audio has long been viewed as a secondary aspect of television. It can only benefit all viewers that audio is now being taken seriously by manufacturers. Unfortunately, I'm afraid that a great many broadcasters still have not realized the importance of audio quality. A number of stations still do not have stereo capability. Some do not even broadcast network feeds in stereo.

I used to call stations to report poor quality programs as they happened, but nobody answers the phone during prime time, and a follow-up the next day usually elicited a "gee, we didn't get any other complaints" type of response. My solution now is to write to advertisers. If enough people complain, advertisers will insist the local stations and networks clean up their acts. After all, their commercials go through the same poor quality equipment.

J. Carl Cooper,  
Director of Engineering,  
Pixel Instruments Corp.  
Santa Clara, Calif.

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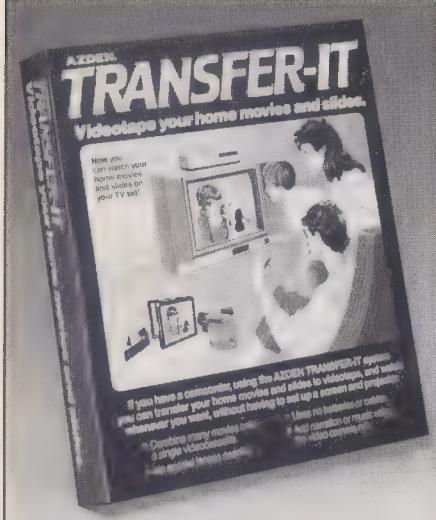
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## STATE OF THE ART

# Q & A

BY RODERICK WOODCOCK

### Dark victory

**Q** Your recent answer ("Q&A," Aug. '89) about the possibility of damaging the pickup in a camcorder by aiming it at the sun leaves me in the dark. I don't know of anyone who would point a camcorder at the sun at high noon, but I'm sure I'm not the only one who likes to tape sunsets. True, I've had some "white outs" in the center of an image (although orange skies and clouds come out great), but if there has been any damage, I haven't noticed it. Am I just lucky, or is twilight not as damaging as the midday sun? Using a filter would only cause the lens aperture to open up wide, right?

John G. Weigner  
Shelburne, Vt.

**A** Aiming a camcorder with a CCD or an MOS pickup at the sun may or may not damage the surface of the chip. It's a question of degree. At high noon, when the sun's rays pass through the thinnest part of the atmosphere, the hot spot focused on a chip could very quickly raise its temperature to a damaging level. If you have ever played with a magnifying glass, you've noticed that it doesn't take long for a finely focused image of the sun to burn the surface the glass is aimed at.

Even trying to photograph the sun through leaves or tree limbs seems risky. But the sun's rays are more benign at sunset. The light is filtered at an angle through the atmosphere, making the kind of shots you're describing more manageable. A thin layer of cloud cover helps too, not only to cool the heat of the sun, but to add the "warm glow" you mention. If your camcorder has a flying erase head or time lapse feature, try taping the sun as it moves behind the horizon. Viewed in real time, the effect can be impressive.

### Tape search

**Q** I bought a Sony ED-V9500 ED Betamax about two months ago and have yet to find any ED Beta tape. I've called virtually every supplier on the

East Coast, all to no avail. According to Sony, Betacam SP tape can be used with ED Beta equipment. Is this true? And how can I find ED Beta cassettes?

T.G. Spence  
Exmore, Va.

**A** Sony offers two ED Beta tape lengths: the one-hour EL-250 and the two-hour EL-500. Call Sony's consumer hotline (800-222-SONY) for names of dealers in your area. If you still have no luck, give Betacam SP tapes a try. Cassettes in this professional-grade format include metal particle tape (as do ED Beta tapes) and shells equipped with ED Beta recognition holes. Ampex, Fuji and Sony offer 30-minute Betacam SP tapes that translate to three-hour (EL-750) tapes when used with ED Beta machines. Betacam SP tapes, however, are more expensive than ED Beta tapes. To find them, you'll have to contact an industrial video dealer. Try MDI, Ltd., of Farmingdale, New York; 800-435-6779.

### Head transplant

**Q** My JVC HR-S100 portable VHS VCR has delivered over 1,000 hours of service. When the deck's heads finally wear out, can I replace its four-head drum with a double-azimuth head unit? And can I install a flying erase head at the same time?

Carol Curtis  
Guilford, Conn.

**A** Video head design is extremely specialized. Because the heads rely on unique circuitry inside the VCR to interpret the signals they record and play back, only a single type of head will work in a given VCR. The same holds true for flying erase heads: You must already have the appropriate circuit board inside your VCR. If you want the benefits of double-azimuth and flying erase heads, you are going to have to purchase a new VCR or camcorder.

*Video Magazine welcomes your questions. Please include a phone number, but not a return envelope as the volume of mail does not permit replies. All letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address queries to Q & A, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.*

## **Technicolor fade**

**Q** A few years ago, I purchased a Technicolor 212 VCR. I am aware the Technicolor video format is no longer available. However, my deck needs repair. Does anyone still work on these machines?

Harris W. Hudson  
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

**A** When the compact, quarter-inch Technicolor video format disappeared several years ago, most of the inventory was purchased by Muntz Electronics, 7700 Densmore Avenue, Van Nuys, California; 818-988-7800. Contact Muntz for further information about repairs.

## **Visible difference**

**Q** I recently bought my first Super-VHS camcorder, an RCA CC-360. But even though the picture quality is a lot better than that from my six-year-old RCA, it is not better than a picture recorded on regular VHS. Since I don't have a TV set with an S-connector, I

played back the tape at a local store, using the S-input on one of the store's monitors. The picture quality wasn't enough to justify the Super VHS expense. Am I expecting too much or is there really a great difference between S-VHS and VHS?

Dwayne Davidson  
Shreveport, La.

**A** After two years of evaluating S-VHS VCRs and camcorders, I can tell you that there is a visible difference between S-VHS and VHS picture quality. Given a decent monitor that can properly display the higher resolution S-VHS images, the difference is plainly visible. You'll have to decide for yourself whether the difference justifies the higher price of S-VHS tapes and equipment.

I assume that while your present TV does not have an S-input, it does have a composite video input. But if you're displaying the camcorder signals via the RF route (channel 3 or 4), you're losing nearly half of the resolution of the system (although even with RF output, you should still see an improvement in picture quality). The RCA 360 is a fine top-of-the-line machine. It would be a

shame to waste its potential on an older TV set. For camcorder use, a monitor with an S-input is strongly suggested, since the original images created in a camcorder (before they are NTSC encoded) can take maximum advantage of the separate processing of the luminance and chrominance signals. S-VHS is a vast improvement over VHS and I've adopted it for all of my recordings.

## **Compact cleaners**

**Q** Does anyone offer Compact VHS cleaning tapes? My Sharp VHS-C camcorder seems to suffer from dirty heads, but my local dealers don't carry cleaning tapes for this format.

Donald Thureau  
Wilmington, Del.

**A** Several brands of VHS-C cleaning tapes are now available. TDK (516-625-0100) makes a dry head cleaner, while Bib (800-325-0853) and Geneva (800-328-6795, ext. 382) offer wet head cleaners. Contact these manufacturers for the names of dealers in your area. ■

# **QUICK ON THE DRAW AND READY FOR ACTION!**

## **CamPocket™**

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When you're out videotaping, the all-new CamPocket makes bulky zipper camera bags obsolete. This tough, well-padded nylon carrier keeps your camcorder exactly where it belongs—right at your side. It provides easy access when you're shooting and protects your equipment when you're not. CamPocket features an adjustable shoulder strap, a camcorder safety strap, a water-resistant inner "rain slicker" with drawstring closure, and outer compartments to store spare tapes and batteries.



Two models are available, for full size and compact camcorders.

For more information on CamPocket and our other quality-plus video necessities, or to place an order, call us toll-free at 1-800-345-SIMA. In Illinois, call 708-679-SIMA.

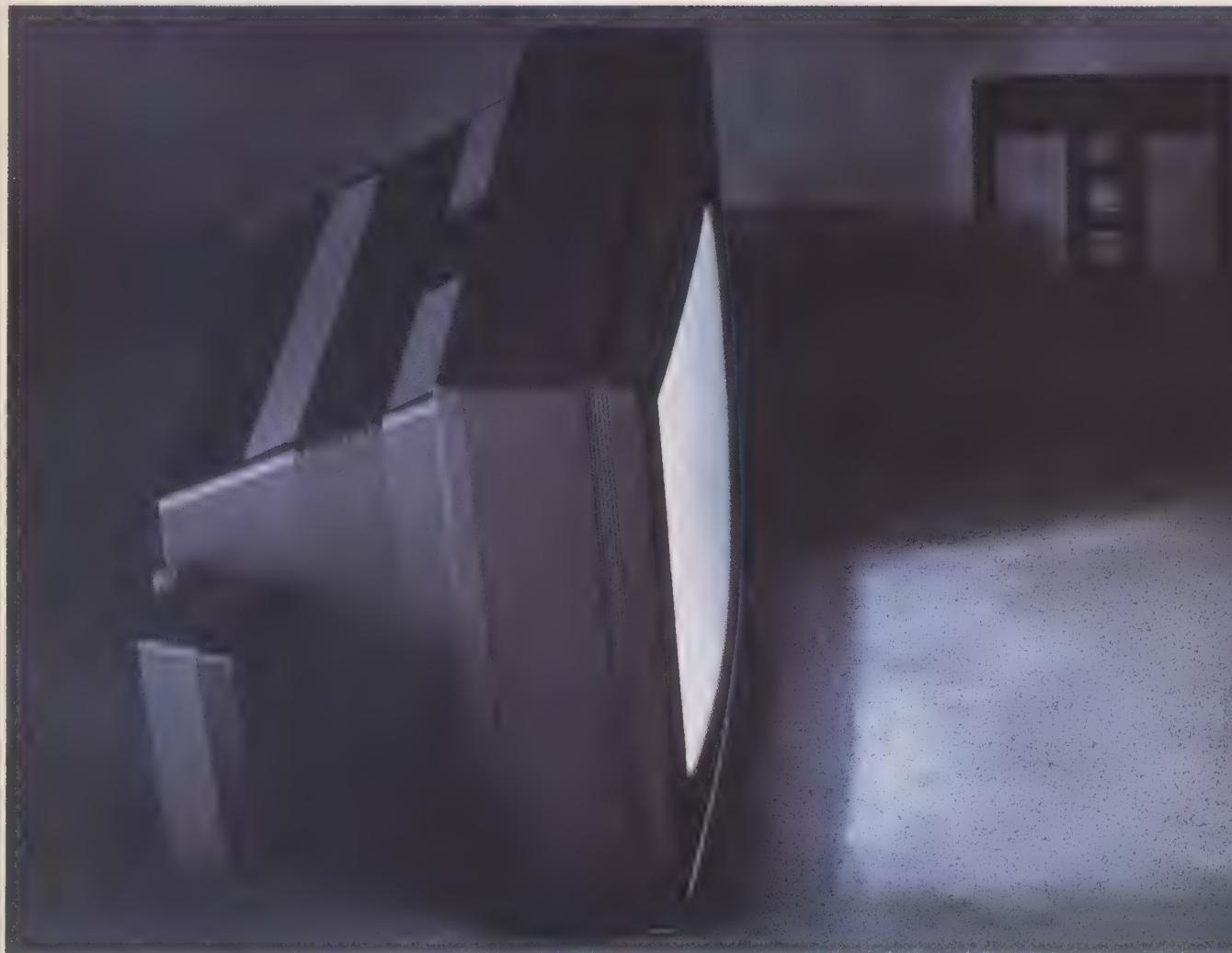
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Throughout the world, Philips has long set the standards for audio and video performance. We continue our leadership in digital technology with Philips IDTV—the highest critically acclaimed innovation in today's television technology.

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**PHILIPS**

# VIDEOTESTS



**Timekeeper:** Panasonic's PV-S4990 Super VHS VCR includes a built-in time base corrector that enhances picture quality for viewing or dubbing.

## VIDEOTEST NUMBER 520

### Panasonic S-VHS editing VCR

Panasonic's PV-S4990 boasts a wealth of features at a reasonable price. Its most impressive feature is a switchable time base corrector (TBC) that straightens out ragged vertical lines. No mechanical transport is without some slight speed instability, and a TBC can correct the problem.

Another remarkable feature, an editing controller, is a bit less formidable than those of competing models (some

of which include an eight-scene capacity), but something had to be sacrificed to keep the price reasonable. Its third major feature is a unique 5-line/20-column titler with one type size and style that uses a bar code wand and a scan sheet. It produces white letters on either a blue background or superimposed over a scene.

Useful editing features include a flying erase head, audio and video dubbing, synchro editing and auto/manual tracking. Its real-time counter goes to the nearest second, but the deck is capable of much tighter edits. Its non-digital special effects include fast search, double speed playback and half-speed slow.

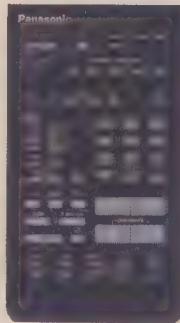
Digital special effects include pic-

ture-in-picture, TV-in-TV (using a second tuner for a second live channel), TV memory, variable speed strobe, variable speed multi strobe, multi slow, multi still, channel search, auto index search, screen zoom and noise reduction. The screen can display four, nine or 16 small images.

The S4990 records index marks automatically every time a recording is started manually from stop mode or from the 8-program/1-month timer. Automatic and recallable onscreen displays, as well as the display on the VCR, report the status of the machine.

Its 155-channel gallium arsenide tuner is noise resistant. Dual RF inputs let you route scrambled programs back

#### Panasonic PV-S4990 Super VHS VCR



<b>DATA</b>
<b>Suggested Price:</b> \$1,599
<b>Weight:</b> 15.2 pounds
<b>Dimensions:</b> 3-7/8 x 18-1/2 x 13-7/8 inches (h/w/d)
<b>Power Consumption:</b> 44 W
<b>Tape Formats:</b> S-VHS, VHS
<b>Tape Speeds:</b> S-VHS—SP, LP; VHS— SP, LP, SLP
<b>Video Heads:</b> 4
<b>Play Speed Select:</b> automatic
<b>Slow Motion:</b> 1/5x to 1/60x

<b>Speed Play:</b> 2x
<b>Cue &amp; Review</b> <b>(Search):</b> SP—7x, SLP—21x
<b>Fast Forward/</b> <b>Rewind Time:</b> 2-1/2 min. for T-120
<b>Remote Pause:</b> camera remote in and synchro edit out
<b>Remote:</b> IR wireless with buttons for VCR power, eject, VCR/TV, channel memory, add/delete, line volume down, index, repeat, recall, program/clock, reset/clear, counter memory, standby, OTR, tracking up/down, speed, 1-2x, pause/still,

<b>record, slow, frame advance, slow/strobe/</b> <b>multi-strobe speed up/</b> <b>down, 2x, stop, play, rew</b> <b>wind (search), fast forward (search), TV</b> <b>memory, call, zoom, NR, strobe, multi-strobe, mode, shift, channel search, P-in-P/T-in-T, a learn/use</b> <b>switch and five programmable buttons</b>
<b>Counter Digits:</b> 5—hrs:mins:secs
<b>Counter Memory:</b> return-to-zero type
<b>Program Start</b> <b>Locator/Index/Cue:</b> index
<b>Linear Audio:</b> mono

**Hi-Fi AFM Audio:**  
stereo

**Tuning Method:**  
frequency synthesis

**Channel Selectors:**  
up/down programmable  
scan on VCR; scan  
plus direct access on  
remote

**Preset Method:**  
auto set plus add/delete  
from scan sequence

**Broadcast Tuning Range:**  
2 to 13, 14 to 69

**Cable Tuning Range:**  
2 to 13, A to W, AA to  
EEE, A-5 to A-1, 5A,  
"65" to "94"

**AFT:** always on

**Timer:**  
1-month, 8-program

**Special Features:**  
flying erase head, still  
frame, frame advance,  
separate eject, audio  
dub, video dub, auto  
rewind, channel lock,  
auto channel change

**Accessories:**  
remote control with batteries,  
bar code scanner with batteries,  
S-video cable, synchro  
edit cord, antenna cable,  
bar code programming sheet, bar  
code titling sheet

#### RESULTS

**Horizontal Resolution:**  
S-VHS—400+ lines;  
VHS—240+ lines



out to an external cable decoder and back in again. The switch for that operation is on the back. The remote can even be programmed to control other devices, such as TVs.

**Description.** The PV-S4990 is black with dark brown wood sides. There are few exposed controls on the front. Power and eject buttons are to the left of the cassette hatch and the jog/shuttle dial and activation switch are at the far right. Above are indicators for shuttle ring and jog dial plus pause, forward and backward modes. Toward the left are indicators for mono, stereo,

*continued on page 98*

**Luminance S/N, Unweighted:**  
SP—46.6 dB; SLP—  
43.6 dB

**Luminance S/N, Weighted:** SP—51.8 dB;  
SLP—48.2 dB

**Video S/N, Unweighted:**  
SP—44.8 dB; LP—43.6  
dB; SLP—41.9 dB

**Video S/N, Weighted:**  
SP—49.8 dB; LP—49.9  
dB; SLP—47.7 dB

**S/N, Chroma AM:**  
SP—47.2 dB; LP—44.9  
dB; SLP—41.5 dB

**S/N, Chroma PM:**  
SP—41.2 dB; LP—40.2  
dB; SLP—38.7 dB

**Audio Frequency Response:**  
hi-fi—20 Hz-20 kHz,

+0.3/-1.7 dB; linear (-3  
dB)—100 Hz-12 kHz,  
SP: 100 Hz-6.3 kHz,  
LP: 80 Hz-5 kHz, SLP

**Hi-Fi Dynamic Range:**  
83.4 dB

**Linear Audio S/N:**  
43.6 dB

**Audio Distortion:**  
hi-fi—0.4%;  
linear—1.2 dB

#### RATINGS

**Picture Quality:**  
very good/excellent

**Audio Quality:**  
excellent

**Operational Ease:**  
very good/excellent

**Overall Performance:**  
very good/excellent

## VIDEOTEST NUMBER 521

### Sharp combi player with CD changer

Sharp's first combination player, the MV-D100, brings a new twist to the field: It doubles as a three-disc CD changer. Like other combi players, the MV-D100 also plays a single eight- or 12-inch videodisc at a time. It offers a full range of special effects for CAV discs, including frame search, still and multi-speed playback, but CLV-disc functions are limited to play, video search and time search.

You can program the deck to play up to 20 chapters or tracks in any sequence you desire, or to play the chapter/tracks in random order. The track programming options can be used with any type of disc. The deck accepts three-inch CDs without an adapter. If more than one three- or five-inch disc is loaded, the player automatically switches to the next disc during playback.

The player's auto tape function minimizes wasted audio tape by automatically reordering tracks for recording so that the maximum number of tracks fits on the tape. You need only enter the length of the tape you're using. An auto fade function lets you fill out a side of the tape with part of a track. The deck then goes into pause mode until you flip the tape over. Recording then begins again from either the beginning of the partial track or the beginning of the next track in the sequence.

Like most combi players, the MV-

D100 has a selectable onscreen information display. However, it cannot recognize stop codes and index marks and it lacks a jog/shuttle dial, A-B repeat between two user-selected points and the ability to play both sides of a videodisc automatically. It does deliver high-quality pictures, and its eight-times oversampling and twin digital-to-analog converters enhance the playing of digital audio.

**Description.** The MV-D100 has the usual black finish with silver metallic trim. The big knob to the right of the front panel is a volume control. The disc drawer occupies most of the front panel's upper half. Nearby are the remote control sensor and buttons for open/close, power, reverse and forward scan, reverse and forward skip (also used to adjust dub tape length in one minute increments), stop/clear, pause/still and play. Below are the display, a power indicator and a headphone jack.

Toward the right are buttons for auto edit, edit, auto fade, C-46, C-60, C-90 and one for each of the three disc wells on the tray. A large depression for 12-, 8-, 5- and 3-inch discs is centered on the tray. When a 5- or a 3-inch disc is loaded in the main disc well, two additional 5- or 3-inch discs may be placed in the tray's two auxiliary wells. Buttons on the front panel and on the remote allow selection of individual discs for playback.

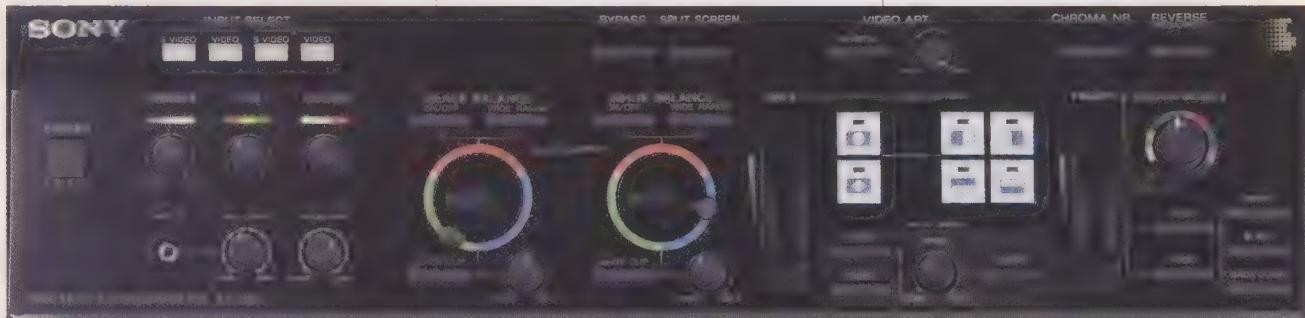
The rear has an optical digital output, an S-video out connector, RCA-type pin jacks for stereo analog/digital audio, a channel 3/4 selector, VHF input and output, two video output jacks,

*continued on page 95*



**Three-Ring Circus:** Sharp's MV-D100 combi player holds up to three compact discs at a time.

# VIDEOTESTS



Hue and Me, Kid: Sony's XV-C900 color corrector has fades, wipes, separate black & white color balance controls and S-video inputs and outputs.

## VIDEOTEST NUMBER 522

### Sony multi-color video corrector

Sony's XV-C900 video multi-color corrector is a signal processor that will let amateur video editors, sophisticated or not, introduce a variety of special effects, colors and refinements into their tapes. In fact, it's a more advanced version of the XV-C700 we reviewed in August 1987. It adds versatility in many areas plus the ability to handle S-video signals. It retains the gamma correction capability we raved about before as well as color, hue and negative/positive reversal. However, it adds circle and dia-

mond wipes to the curtain wipes; a choice of black, white and eight other background colors; and a variable-speed automatic fade or wipe function.

The C900 has separate black and white balance joysticks with narrow and wide correction ranges. It uses clip switches and variable clip level controls for both black and white video. A single knob controls the mix of line and source audio levels, while a mono mixing microphone retains an independent level control. All these improvements have been made for a modest \$200 increase in suggested price.

**Description.** The VCR-sized XV-C900 is black with touches of color in logos and legends. All the controls are on the front, the lower part of which slopes gently outward. At the left are

four translucent input selectors. Separate buttons let you select either S-video or standard video for inputs 1 and 2, letting the processor effectively act as a four-input switcher even though there are two audio inputs.

The vertical part of the front panel also has buttons for bypass, split screen for judging before-and-after processing, chroma noise reduction, negative/positive reverses and video art reverse. A rotary control determines the level of video art.

The sloping part of the panel has the power button and remaining controls, which fall into five groups. The first group consists of a mic jack, rotary controls for mic mixing and source/line audio mixing, and video controls for gamma, hue and color. Each of the next two groups, which regulate black and white balance, consists of buttons for on/off, wide range and clip; a rotary control for clip level and a joystick for the actual balancing.

The fourth group has wipe controls that include a manual wipe bar, pattern buttons for a circle, a diamond and left, right, top and bottom curtains. The curtains may be used separately or combined to produce a box wipe. Additional controls affect the wipes and the fades. There are buttons to select whether wipes or fades work automatically, a rotary control for effect speed and a start button.

The remaining group has the fade bar and buttons to determine whether video or audio signals fade and whether the video fades to or from white, black or a background color. Available background colors are white, yellow, cyan, green, magenta, red, blue and gray. The *continued on page 102*

### Editor's Note

Just as video components continue to improve, so do our "Videotests." Last month we introduced a new, more useful means of measuring signal-to-noise ratios. While our test equipment remains the same, we have adjusted the settings to filter out low frequency noise below 10 kilohertz when measuring video and luminance S/N ratios. Such noise has little visible effect on a picture. Omitting this range yields slightly higher S/N figures and a wider spread between the best and the poorest machines.

In measuring chroma S/N ratios, we will cover low frequency noise down to 100 Hertz, instead of our prior level of 50 kHz, because low frequency color noise is more easily discernible. Overall, the new settings generate S/N ratios that more closely correspond to the human eye's perceptions of a picture's quality, as well as to filter settings used by the broadcast and engineering communities.

For readers who wish to compare S/N ratios from the old and the new settings, "Videotests" for this month and the next month will include two sets of S/N numbers in the text. The numbers in parenthesis represent decibel values obtained with the previous settings. —LB

I've seen pretty good TV in far flung exotic



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# VIDEOTESTS



**Feature Feats:** Zenith's VRF510HF VHS hi-fi VCR has intro search and next-function memory capabilities.

## VIDEOTEST NUMBER 523

### Zenith VHS hi-fi VCR

After a year or two, useful features introduced on high-end machines often trickle down to midpriced models. Zenith's VRF510HF is a well-packed example. It has four video heads, hi-fi and MTS sound, five-speed slow motion, on-screen menus, an 8-event/14-day timer, a 178-channel tuner, auto programming, auto digital tracking, a real-time counter, real-time go-to, VHS index search, intro search and a multibrand remote control that can also operate TV sets and wireless cable boxes.

The list of features continues with

#### Zenith VRF510HF VHS VCR

##### DATA

**Suggested Price:**  
\$649

**Weight:** 16.5 pounds

**Dimensions:**  
3-3/8 x 17-1/4 x 13  
inches (h/w/d)

**Power Requirements:**  
120 VAC, 60 Hz

**Power Consumption:**  
30 W

**Tape Format:**  
VHS HQ

**Tape Speeds:**  
record—SP, LP; play—  
SP, LP, EP

**Video Heads:** 4

**Play Speed Select:**  
automatic

**Slow Motion:**  
1/30x, 1/24x, 1/18x,  
1/12x, 1/6x

**Speed Play:**  
2x, using play button

**Cue & Review Search:**  
locking—7x, SP and  
13x, EP; non-locking—  
7x, SP and 21x, EP

**Fast Forward/  
Rewind Time:**  
approx. 5 min for T-120

**Remote:**  
IR wireless with a  
switch to determine  
VCR, cable or TV con-  
trol; an up/down adjust  
rocker; and buttons for  
power, menu, select,  
source/index, channel

auto power on, auto play/rewind/eject, auto timer activation, blue-screen audio/video mute, locking and non-locking search, double speed play, remote eject, RF off, two-speed record/three speed playback and a camera pause jack usable during dubbing.

One attractive touch is the relatively control-free front panel, although this is a mixed blessing since some of the control buttons you may be used to seeing on other VCRs have been replaced by functions accessible only through menus. However, the Zenith's performance is good enough to make it an attractive compromise when looking for the best trade-off between features and cost.

**Description.** The VRF510HF is a slim black deck just 3-3/8 inches high with a rather bare front. To the right of

up, channel down, volume up, volume down, 10-digit keypad, enter, record, stop, pause, TV-video/mute, rewind, play, fast forward and flashback

**Counter Digits:**  
5-hrs:mins:secs

**Program Start  
Locator/Index/Cue:**  
index

**Linear Audio:** mono

**Hi-Fi AFM Audio:**  
stereo

**Tuning Method:**  
electronic quartz

**Channel Selectors:**  
up/down programmable  
scan on VCR; scan  
plus keypad direct ac-  
cess on remote

**Preset Method:**  
auto program with add  
and delete

**Broadcast Tuning  
Range:** 2 to 13, 14 to 69

**Cable Tuning Range:**  
122 channels

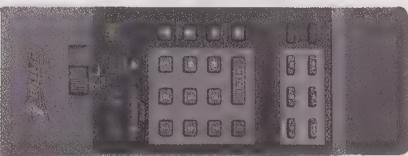
**AFT:** switchable AFC

**Timer:** 8-program, 14-day

**Special Features:**  
still frame, remote  
pause, counter memory,  
auto rewind, channel  
lock, auto channel  
change

**Absent Features:**  
flying erase heads,

frame advance, visible  
fast forward and re-  
wind, separate eject,  
auto dub, video dub, in-  
sert edit



the cassette hatch are buttons for power, rewind (search), pause/slow, standby, stop/eject, fast forward (search), play/2x and record/ITR. The ITR (instant timer record) works in half-hour segments up to four hours. A standby button first shows the current time, then sets the ITR for the next half-hour. Successive pushes increase the delay in half-hour increments up to 24 hours.

Farther right on the front panel are the infrared remote sensor, the main display and discrete indicators for auto tracking, left and right recording level, power, stereo, SAP and SAP record. There are also buttons for TV/video,

**Accessories:**  
remote control with bat-  
teries, video cable,  
stereo audio cable, 75-  
ohm antenna cable and  
300 to 75-ohm adapter

##### RESULTS

**Horizontal Resolution:**  
240 lines

##### Unweighted

**Video S/N:**  
SP—46.4 dB;  
EP—42.9 dB

**Weighted Video S/N:**  
SP—52.6 dB;  
EP—50.4 dB

**S/N, Chroma AM:**  
SP—45.7 dB;  
EP—41.7 dB

**S/N, Chroma PM:**  
SP—47.6 dB;  
EP—39.3 dB

##### Audio Frequency Response:

hi-fi—20 Hz-20 kHz,  
+0.5/-4.7 dB; linear (-3  
dB)—125 Hz-12 kHz,  
SP; 125 Hz-5 kHz, EP

**Hi-Fi Dynamic Range:**  
81.3 dB

**S/N, Audio:** 43.2 dB

**Audio Distortion:**  
hi-fi—0.3%; linear—1.2%

##### RATINGS

**Picture Quality:**  
excellent (VHS stan-  
dards)

##### Audio Quality:

good to very good

##### Operational Ease:

good/excellent

**Overall Performance:**  
very good

menu, select and channel/adjust up and down. The band with logos across the bottom swings down to reveal a compartment that houses a rotary control for picture sharpness and buttons for index mark and erase, SP/EP, hi-fi/normal/mix, clock/counter/enter, counter reset/cancel, repeat, tracking - and +, and timer.

The rear panel is straightforward with a power cord and an AC outlet at the far right, but a switch that determines whether the outlet is switched or not lies at the far left, making it a bit confusing. Also on the left are in and out F-connectors for VHF/UHF/CATV and a switch for channel 3/4/off. RCA-type pin jacks for video in and out, stereo audio in and two sets of stereo out jacks are also present. The video jacks are one above the other, but the audio jacks are organized so that the inputs separate the outputs from the matching video inputs.

A remote input lets the VCR act as a recording slave during dubbing, and a knockout plug covers a connector for Base Tac, a device for interfacing with some types of cable boxes. The manual refers you to Zenith dealers for further information on the device.

The remote control can run a VCR, a cable box or a TV. A switch determines which type of component will respond. The remote must be programmed using its keypad, and it can only control one component of each type. It has a single up/down rocker, an indicator used when adjusting for foreign devices and buttons for power, menu, source/index, channel and volume up and down, a 10-digit keypad, enter, record, stop, pause, TV-video/mute, rewind (search), play, fast forward (search) and flashback.

**Operation.** The VRF510HF is easy to hook up. Just be careful with the audio wires if you use them. Setting the remote for the TV and a cable box is as easy as looking up a few numbers on a table and punching them into the remote. Basic record and play are equally easy, and using the exposed buttons for more than one function is actually simpler than we expected. But so many features are hidden in menus that the VCR can be frustrating to use. There are four menus that always cycle through in the same order on successive pushes of the menu button. They're called: VCR, program, feature and tuner. Unfortunately, functions you are most likely to use, like counter memory and intro search, are in the feature menu, and getting to them requires a lot of button punching. For example, it takes six pushes to set the counter memory. Front panel switches may clutter up the front of a machine,

but they are easier to use. However, most of the features you'll want are present. Others, like index mark, erase and search, are more accessible. Since this VCR is chock-full of features but a little tedious to use, we give its operation a dual rating of excellent and good.

**Performance.** Despite the mixed results on operation, picture quality is excellent for a VHS machine. Its horizontal resolution is 240-plus lines. The

unweighted video signal-to-noise ratio is 46.4 (44.1) decibels at SP and 42.9 (41.6) dB at EP. The weighted video S/N is 52.6 (47.3) dB at SP and 50.4 (45.6) dB at EP. Chroma AM S/N is 45.7 (47.8) dB at SP and 41.7 (44.4) dB at EP. Chroma PM S/N is 47.6 (47.8) dB at SP and 39.3 (44.6) dB at EP (see page 42 for an explanation of the numbers in parentheses). Compared to other VHS

continued on page 98

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THE YEARS  
BEST



## TENTH ANNUAL VIDEO AWARDS

Ten years ago, presenting awards for the year's best products and releases was a simpler affair. Camcorders, rear-screen projection TV sets and the 8mm format did not even exist. Consumers could choose from only two videodisc players and VCRs loaded from the top. Feature packages

ty. New components have so many features designers are hard-pressed to find room for all the controls. Pre-recorded tapes sell for as little as \$9.95 (\$5.99 with a Big Mac) and blockbusters migrate to video even before they can earn their Oscars. Videodiscs, which are experiencing something of a renaissance, are pioneering new ground by adding fresh visuals and fascinating commentaries to familiar movies.

Home video has come so far that some of the winners of this year's *Video Magazine Awards* would look like science-fiction props to readers of our first awards roundup. But you be the judge as Technical Editor Lancelot Braithwaite and Contributing Editors Ira Robbins and Mark Fleischmann hand out their choices. And don't overlook Contributing Editor Lou Kesten's walk on the wacky side. It's clear proof of Kesten's Second Law of Video: For every action there is an equal and slightly loony reaction.



were so limited that, sad to say, we sneered at the idea of two-week programmability. Movie releases were a trickle compared to today's flood and Jane Fonda still exercised in private.

The camcorders we saw them as crude prototypes are today things of beau-

BY LANCELOT BRAITHWAITE

# GEAR OF THE YEAR

21 Top VCRs, camcorders, LV players, TVs and accessories that beat the odds.



What's new? In 1989, the story was small advances across a broad front. Step-up improvements punctuated by a few surprises. And the sense of a new era beginning to take shape.

VCRs and camcorders boasted Hi8, the upgraded version of 8mm. Televisions became sharper, brighter and bigger. One camcorder, in particular, got very small, another proved it is possible to shoot virtually in the dark, while a third sprouted a second head. Personal video products tentatively explored new ways to use video. Videodisc and CD decks, boldly integrated into so-called combination players, proliferated. Home editing features multiplied and spread to more camcorders and VCRs.

Improved Definition TV circuits appeared in televisions by a number of makers, a harbinger of the onset of high-definition TV, which is still seven to ten years away. Meanwhile, the Japanese added ghost reducing circuitry to some of their domestic sets. And we may soon have that too, along with VHS





VCRs that accept Compact VHS cassettes without adapters. Trying to keep pace with 8mm equipment, the VHS-C format got a shot in the arm from new cassettes that run for 30 and 90 minutes at the standard and slow speeds. Still longer versions are in the works.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. It's only January and this month's task is to put 1989 in perspective by recognizing those products that made the year memorable. As in nine previous years, our nominations for *Video Magazine Awards* (VMAs) come from the decks, camcorders, screens and accessories we rigorously tested in the preceding months. A few interesting products, like Panasonic's PV-S4990 Super VHS VCR and NEC's 7-inch ID3 projection set, missed the cutoff date for our judging and will be considered in our next round of awards. But there's no shortage of exciting contenders left. Here are our picks for 1989 and the reasons why they're worth a second look.

### BEST VCRS

Technological change in products usually appears first at the top of a line. This year proved to be no exception. VHS innovations came primarily in editing features. The best of the new breed added multi-event edit controllers, synchro edit jacks, titlers and even the ability to lay down hi-fi audio tracks before a picture is recorded. Meanwhile, flying erase heads and jog/shuttle dials spread to more models. There was also a measurable improvement in signal-to-noise ratios.

Of the half-dozen Super VHS decks we examined, JVC's HR-S10000U and Toshiba's SV-R990 easily outdistanced the pack in features and capabilities. The S10000U even offers the option of laying down hi-fi audio and video signals separately, a first for any VHS VCR. But both deserve *Video Magazine*

**Hardware Heroes:**  
Canon's A1 Hi8 camcorder (above) boasts a unique ergonomic design, while Proton's VT-331 monitor/receiver features Aphex sound processors.



Awards. These are truly sophisticated decks and, while novices can enjoy watching tapes on them, users should know something about how video systems work to exploit their powers to the fullest.

We reviewed three VHS VCRs during the past year, and Sony's SLV-70HF is the clear standout because of its solid picture and sound performance. The Sharp Optonica VC-G960, with its unique talking remote control, was appealing, but it is a monaural machine without hi-fi. Sony's SLV-757 simply didn't match the 70HF in picture quality, and a decorative door in front of the cassette hatch almost negates the utility of its automatic play features.

Even though it lacks a jog/shuttle dial, the 70HF has several useful editing features, including a flying erase head, multiple control options, a one-scene edit controller, and an edit mode that displays source and record pictures with counters on separate screen insets.

Moving to Hi8, we were struck by an advantage the format shares with Beta VCRs over VHS decks: a higher writing speed. This is like having a bigger sheet of paper with which to take notes. While Hi8 doesn't offer the 500 lines of



**Decks Deluxe:**  
Philips' CDV-488 player (above) memorizes disc segments, while JVC's HR-S10000 VCR (right; remote at left) records video and hi-fi audio separately.



# BEST GEAR

horizontal resolution ED Beta delivers, it matches the 400-plus lines of Super VHS. Sony, Canon, Ricoh and a few other manufacturers all offer Hi8 products. The first VCR among them, Sony's EV-S900, is similar to its earlier EV-S800 in that it possesses a jog/shuttle dial, an onboard edit controller and control S and L options. But it's a first and an important one, and we've given it an award for Best Hi8 VCR.

## TOP CAMCORDERS

Consumers bought more camcorders in 1989 than in any previous year, partly because camcorders kept getting smaller, lighter and more sophisticated. Eight millimeter camcorders have made most of the progress in size and weight, and also sales as more people realize that shooting a master tape on 8mm does not



**Top Tube:** Philips' 27J345 IDTV fills in the spaces between scan lines for a smoother picture.

get in the way of making VHS or Beta copies, edited or not. But all formats benefited as digital chips allowed camcorders to memorize frames for scenes and titles, superimposition and special effects. In addition, automatic focusing mechanisms improved, more manual options appeared and camcorders became more sensitive to low light levels.

In fact, it was so difficult to choose a leader among the five VHS camcorders we tested that we're awarding the VMAs to Panasonic's PV-535 and to RCA's CC320 ProEdit models. Pan-

asonic's camcorder has two camera heads—a first among camcorders—so that users can dissolve from one live scene to another or employ special effects in mixing pictures from the two cameras. The camcorder is also loaded with automatic, manual and editing options.

RCA's ProEdit unit includes an insert edit feature, playback controls in the camera mode, a titler and limited animation capabilities. We also looked this year at GE's CG9920, notable for its digital low light boost; the Magnavox CVJ360, which has a shake-reducing lens assembly; and the Panasonic PV-520, which includes a self-powered color enhancement light.

Although we did not test any S-VHS camcorders, we reviewed one Compact S-VHS model, JVC's GR-S707. A top performer packed with creative features, it proved to be one of the most sophisticated camcorders we examined and easily earned an award. The first Compact camcorder to offer hi-fi sound, it also includes audio dubbing, insert editing, interval recording and a limited animation capability. The two VHS-C camcorders we reviewed, Minolta's Series C-50 and JVC's GR-A30,

## Best Products of 1989

### Selection Criteria

Products selected for Video Magazine Awards must embody either a technological breakthrough, a significant advance over existing technology (in which case winners may be a one-of-a-kind product) or outperform other equipment in their class, as measured in performance tests by Berger-Braithwaite Laboratories. Award categories cover the range of video equipment available to consumers, including VCRs, videodisc players, camcorders, display systems and accessories.

### Equipment of the Year

- Toshiba SV-R990 and JVC HR-S1000U, Best Super VHS VCRs
- Sony SLV-70HF, Best VHS VCR
- Sony EV-S900, Best Hi8 VCR
- JVC GR-S707, Best Super VHS-Compact Camcorder
- Panasonic PV-535 and RCA CC320 ProEdit, Best VHS Camcorders
- Sony CCD-V99 and Canon A1, Best Hi8 Camcorders
- Sony CCD-TR5, Best 8mm Camcorder
- Pioneer CLD-91, Sony MDP-510 and Philips CDV-488, Best Combination LaserVision Players
- Proton VT-331 and Sony KV-32XBR10, Best Monitor/ Receivers
- Mitsubishi CK-3514R TV, Special Award for Technical Achievement
- Philips 27J245 IDTV, Special Award for Technical Achievement
- NAD MR-13, Special Award for Technical Achievement
- Hitachi VT-LC50A VHS VCR with Monitor, Special Award for Technical Achievement
- JVC JX-S900U AV Selector, Best Video Accessory
- Shure HTS Theater Reference System, Best Audio Accessory



**Winner's Circle:**  
Hitachi's VT-LC50A  
TVCR (above), JVC's  
JX-S900U AV selector  
(top) and Panasonic's  
PV-535 dual-head camcorder (right).

performed about par for the format.

The Hi8 format proved more exciting. Sony's CCD-V99 gets the nod over Canon's A1 and H460 models, thanks to superior performance and resolution. However, Canon's A1, which can be held like a conventional camcorder or like a 35mm film camera, wins a VMA for its unusual ergonomic design.

Of the four 8mm camcorders tested, the clear winner is Sony's diminutive CCD-TR5. In fact, Japanese consumers are already voting for it by making it one of the most popular camcorders to hit the Japanese market, where it has been available for several months. Despite its size and lightness, the CCD-TR5 has all the automatic and manual features of much larger camcorders, including the ability to memorize graphics for superimposition. It's a winner on every count.

## COMBI PLAYERS

After a decade of slow growth, LaserVision players, now also known as CDV players, are finally starting to take off. More than 3,000 videodisc titles are available and many new ones join the list every month. Combination players are also widely available. In fact, all six of the LV players we tested also accept

**Let's Work:**  
The RCA CC320's playback controls operate in camera mode.



five- and three-inch discs.

Because the category demonstrated so much innovation, three players garnered a VMA. Pioneer's CLD-91 plays both sides of a disc and demonstrated the highest picture quality and audio that's competitive with the best CD players. Sony's MDP-510 has a custom index system, intro scan and many other worthwhile features. Finally, Philips' CDV-488 offers an analog comb filter and the ability to memorize favorite segments for more than 200 discs. All explore interesting new territory and point the way toward future developments.

## MONITOR/RECEIVERS

The old TV is rapidly being superseded by monitor/receivers with audio/video inputs. There is also a growing trend among TV makers to include sound systems designed by audio specialists, as demonstrated by two of the sets winning this year's top honors. The Proton VT-331 has sound processors by Aphex and a cool picture with the lowest noise level of the ten sets we tested, while Sony's KV-32XBR10 has the Sound Retrieval System developed by Hughes Aircraft for precise audio imaging.

NAD opened a new chapter in high-quality small sets. Its 13-inch MR-13, which earns its award with innovation and performance, mixes high resolution with S-video compatibility. Back on the larger side of the fence, Mitsubishi's 35-inch CK-3514R gets a Technical Achievement nod for the great improvement in performance its new model demonstrates. Mitsubishi is the only



**Bijou Blitz:** Shure's powerful HTS Theater Reference System has three amps and six speakers.

maker of 35-inch tubes, and advances in tube design account for the performance boost.

Philips' 27J245 27-incher wins a Technical Achievement Award for being the first satisfactory Improved Definition TV to reach the market. It uses computer memory and special signal processing algorithms to generate the missing lines in each field for a very smooth-talking progressive scan.

*continued on page 110*

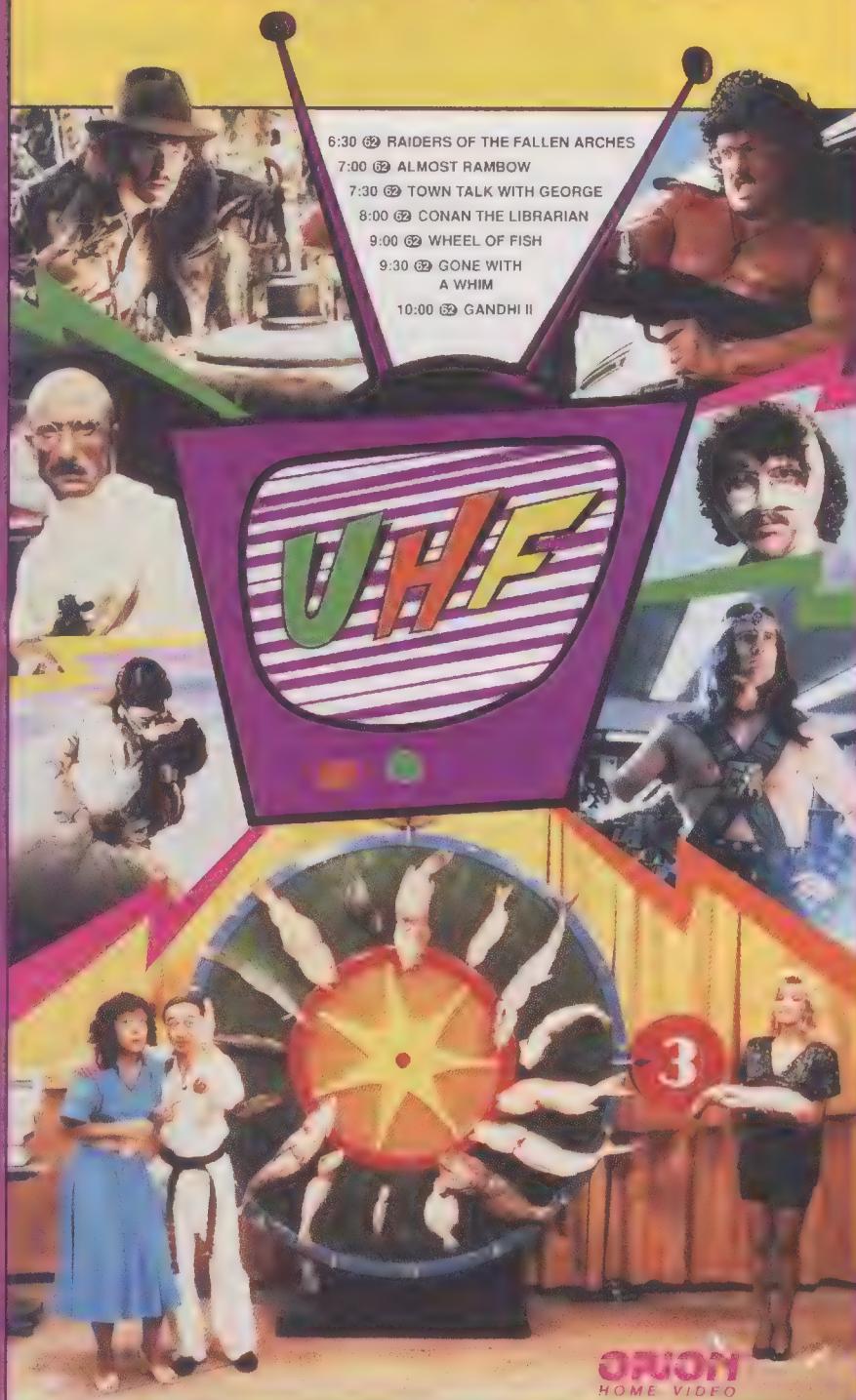


**Cam King:**  
Sony's CCD-V99 Hi8 camcorder offers unsurpassed picture quality.



**It's crazy. It's zany.. It's hysterical.  
It's TV According to "Weird Al" Yankovic.**

6:30 62 RAIDERS OF THE FALLEN ARCHES  
7:00 62 ALMOST RAINBOW  
7:30 62 TOWN TALK WITH GEORGE  
8:00 62 CONAN THE LIBRARIAN  
9:00 62 WHEEL OF FISH  
9:30 62 GONE WITH A WHIM  
10:00 62 GANDHI II



CINECORP PRESENTS **WEIRD AL YANKOVIC "UHF"** KEVIN McCARTHY MICHAEL RICHARDS DAVID BOWIE  
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BY IRA ROBBINS

# TOP TAPES

*The funniest, scariest & most action-packed movies of '89.*

**And the Winner Is:**

The Marx Brothers' *The Cocoanuts* (top) wins a Video Magazine Award as the year's Best Classic on tape, *Alien Nation* (right) takes top honors for Science Fiction, and *Die Hard* (bottom) is king of the Action/Adventure flicks.

**C**RASH! THWACK! Holy rewind, caped crusader! The spectacular yuletide battle of the megahits—*Batman*, *Ghostbusters II*, *Rain Man*, *Scrooged* and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* duking it out for shelf space and sales in the nation's video stores—provided an apt climax to an exciting year in pre-recorded video. Tapes of these wildly popular yet mediocre movies (boasting a cumulative box office gross of three-quarters of a billion dollars!), not to mention Disney's beloved *Bambi*, may have dominated the past few months, but the rest of 1989 was no dull Sunday afternoon.

Credit above-average quality and variety, quicker-than-ever release schedules and a mercifully small number of needless sequels for the year's bumper crop. Despite the large shadow cast by the cinematic moneymakers, a significant video impact was made by foreign directors, independent filmmakers and a bullpen of creative rookies. Companies dedicated to restoring and releasing non-mainstream films kept screens glowing with uncommonly entertaining entertainment.

With so many strong contenders for Video Magazine Awards (VMA), select-



ing the best releases of the past 12 months required appreciably more viewing and contemplation than past years. That done, here are the winners (and some of the runners-up).

**COMEDY**

This year's comedies delivered one delightful surprise—unlike those released in 1988, many were actually funny. Even better, a malicious streak of black humor running through a number of hip dark horses (*Heathers*, *How to Get Ahead in Advertising*, *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills*) satisfied the demands of discerning, hard-to-please viewers. A welcome shift away from inanity (*The Naked Gun*, *Police Academy 6* and the stupidly amusing *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* notwithstanding) meant more intelligent films to provoke thought as well as laughter.

Foremost among these adult comedies is Rob Reiner's *When Harry Met Sally...*, a late arrival that considers the

notion of a single man (Billy Crystal) and a single woman (Meg Ryan) as platonic friends with incisive wit and a realistic sensibility. Although much better than his usual, Blake Edwards' *Skin Deep*, about an alcoholic writer with no control over his libido, was hindered by a weak script and John Ritter's limited range.

Professional baseball's sudden vogue as a film milieu led to *Bull Durham* and *Major League*. Both are charming, well-

# TOP TAPES

informed and sporadically uproarious. The former, with Kevin Costner, Tim Robbins and Susan Sarandon, is sharper and more engaging than the cartoonish *Major League*, which takes its eye off the ball too often to follow aging catcher Tom Berenger's trivial pursuit of his ex-wife. (John Sayles' excellent drama, *Eight Men Out*, and the decidedly minor-league *Stealing Home*, with Mark Harmon and Jodie Foster, also focus on America's favorite pastime.)

Eddie Murphy and Arsenio Hall put on a lot of makeup for the third-rate, oddly racist *Coming to America*, overlooking comic substance for eye-catching set pieces. Mike Nichols took a misguided stab at couching ambiguously feminist social commentary in a cold-hearted Cinderella story and came up with *Working Girl*. Jonathan Demme's *Married to the Mob* would have been great had brilliant turns by Mercedes Ruehl and Michelle Pfeiffer not been offset by Matthew Modine's lame effort.

Four imaginatively offbeat films also deserve mention. Thanks to Winona Ryder, the first half of the fanciful *Heathers* is a bitchy delight, but Christian Slater's hamminess and a script that throws up its hands turned this contender into a brilliant mistake. *I'm Gonna Git You Sucka*, Keenen Ivory Wayans' nifty spoof of blaxploitation pictures, also started out better than it ended. Despite the melodramatic plot, John Cusack and lone Skye brought winsome life to an odd romance in *Say Anything....* Finally, Paul Morrissey's loopy *Spike of Bensonhurst* took a good-natured poke at Italian-Americans, apolitically foreshadowing Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* from the other side of Brooklyn.

That leaves *Big*, actress-cum-director Penny Marshall's turn at the oft-told transference tale. As a kid who wakes up one morning in an adult body, Tom Hanks turned a great script into a howling collection of gaffes and glories. A fine supporting cast helped Hanks capture his character's paradoxical recklessness and vulnerability.

## DRAMA

Filmmakers mined literature for several of the year's most significant dramas on tape, with varying results. *The Accidental Tourist*, from Anne Tyler's novel

**Little Big Man:**  
Tom Hanks' stellar performance earns *Big* ■ Video Magazine Award for Best Comedy of the year.



about a writer of travel books, was stupefyingly dull, a model of contrived, cerebral filmmaking despite the presence of William Hurt and Geena Davis. On the other hand, *Dangerous Liaisons*, Stephen Frears' colorful tale of 18th century French boudoir intrigue, provided a lusty diversion. Glenn Close, Michelle Pfeiffer and John Malkovich, plus impressive period detail, gave the film appreciably more gusto. Likewise, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, adapted

**King of Comedy:**  
*The Best of Eddie Murphy/Saturday Night Live* takes the Best Comedy Program award.



from Milan Kundera's novel, offered highbrows a spot of intellectual—and sexual—stimulation.

In fact-based fiction, the invisible point at which truth yields to artistic license gives each project its own element of uncertainty. This year saw more semi-historical efforts than usual, from the ancient (Martin Scorsese's provocative but lengthy *Last Temptation of Christ*) to the totally contemporary: *Talk Radio*, a searing look at the intolerant kooks on both sides of shock broadcasting, is partly based on the 1984 murder of talk-show host Alan Berg.

Other films-on-tape sprang from the headlines last year. *Scandal*, with Joanne Whalley-Kilmer as Christine Keeler and Bridget Fonda as Mandy Rice-Davies, was a stylish but hollow recap of the British war minister's disastrous 1963 sex-and-Soviets indiscretion. The title role in Paul Schrader's intense but off-putting *Patty Hearst* went to an Englishwoman, Natasha Richardson, while British director Alan Parker considered a deeply painful chapter in American history with *Mississippi Burning*, an irresponsible unrealistic account of the FBI investigation into the 1964 murders of three civil rights workers.

*Betrayed*, starring Debra Winger and Tom Berenger, proceeds from the existence of murderous white supremacist organizations in the Midwest, but makes too little sense to be taken seriously.

*The Accused*, with Jodie Foster as the victim of a savage attack by a bunch of bar patrons, makes no pretense of historical veracity, delving instead into the legal system's brutalization of rape victims. Only *A Cry in the Dark*, Meryl Streep's bravura portrayal of an Australian woman inexplicably convicted of murdering her baby, managed both powerful emotional resonance and a reasonably accurate recapitulation of the incident.

In this year's VMA winner, *Dead Ringers*, real events inspired director



#### Dark Horses:

This year's winners include stylish horror fest *Suspiria* (left) and the moving Vietnam documentary *Dear America* (below).



**Love and Death:**  
*Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (above) wins Best Foreign Language film, while the terrifying *Dead Ringers* (right) captures Best Drama.



out of comedy in the above-average *Clean and Sober*) didn't totally humiliate himself.

Bruce Willis met similar skepticism when he bagged the starring job in this year's action/adventure winner, but *Die Hard* proved the perfect vehicle for making him a movie star. Violent, highly charged and loaded with implausibilities, *Die Hard* relies on Willis' self-amused snigger—a sweaty variation on Eddie Murphy's Axel Foley character—to make its incendiary action memorable. *Off Limits*, an exciting military police whodunit set in Vietnam, with Willem Dafoe and Gregory Hines, is our choice for runner-up.

#### CLASSIC FILMS

Even as colorization defaces the finest artifacts of cinema's golden age, deluxe anniversary releases of *The Wizard of Oz* and *Gone with the Wind*, as well as a restored *Lawrence of Arabia*, demonstrate that video companies are capable of treating old films with respect, even reverence. Recognizing that contemporary hits aren't the only type of videos people watch, several studios have begun investigating their film vaults to see what's left for release on tape.

Meanwhile, the trickle of formerly (and surprisingly) unavailable goodies continues, including Preston Sturges' wonderful *Sullivan's Travels* and several from the peerless Marx Brothers. All

*continued on page 110*

## Best Tapes of 1989



**Really Big Show:**  
Ed Sullivan imitator  
in *I Wanna Hold Your Hand*.

### Made for Theaters

- *Big* (CBS/Fox Video), Best Comedy Film
- *Dead Ringers* (Media Home Entertainment), Best Drama
- *Die Hard* (CBS/Fox Video), Best Action/Adventure Film
- *The Cocoanuts* (MCA Home Video), Best Classic Film
- *Alien Nation* (CBS/Fox Video), Best Science Fiction Film
- *Suspiria* (Magnum Entertainment), Best Horror Film
- *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* (Warner Home Video), Best Musical
- *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (Orion Home Video), Best Foreign Language Film
- *The Thin Blue Line* (HBO Video), Best Documentary
- *Eat the Rich* (RCA/Columbia Pictures Home Video), Sleeper of the Year

### Made for Video

- *The Best of Eddie Murphy/Saturday Night Live* (Paramount Home Video), Best Comedy Program
- *Who's Better Who's Best* (PolyGram Music Video), Best Music Program
- *Minute Movie Masterpieces* (Rhino Video), Best Instructional Program
- *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam* (HBO Video), Best Documentary
- *Grand Slam!* (VidAmerica), Best Sports Program
- *BBC Video World*, Special Merit Award

David Cronenberg's fabricated though terrifying portrait of twin gynecologists with some very serious problems. Jeremy Irons is spectacular as both ill-fated men. Sophisticated computer-controlled camera technology made for a seamless, side-by-side effect, staggering in its invisibility. By turns chilling and amusing, *Dead Ringers* is engrossing, provocative drama, an amazing film without real precedent.

If the *Batman* phenomenon proves

anything, it's that P.T. Barnum was too generous about human nature. This slapdash mess lacks most standard features (plot, dialogue, logic, characters, etc.) of a major motion picture. Even the much-vaunted sets couldn't fill the gaping creative hole. The best that can be said about *Batman* is that the oddly cast Michael Keaton (who first broke

BY MARK FLEISCHMANN

THE YEAR'S  
BEST

# WINNING DISCS

From apes to extras, top titles come packed with surprises.

Without exaggeration, 1989 was the best year ever for the Laservision videodisc. Never have I seen so many eye-catching transfers and defect-free pressings, so much gorgeously saturated color or so many carefully mixed and surround-encoded soundtracks. Pioneer, Image, 3M, Criterion, MCA, Warner and other disc makers and distributors deserve a salute.

Sadly, many of the theatrical year's blockbusters migrated to disc too late for this year's consideration, despite appearing on tape in 1989. These include *Batman* (Warner), *Bambi* (Walt Disney Home Video) and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (Touchstone). Discophiles may also be surprised to find that fabulous new disc versions of *The Wizard of Oz* (Criterion and MGM/UA), *Gone with the Wind* (MGM/UA), *Casablanca* (Criterion) and *Rebel Without a Cause* missed winning Video Magazine Awards this year because other releases look even better.

Nevertheless, this year's top discs offer an unusually variegated mix of drama, comedy, special effects and entertaining information. Our selections are evenly divided between contemporary movies, classic movies and non-theatrical releases. Some of the movies contain supplementary material exclusive to the disc medium. Others are merely excellent. Two of the three non-theatrical discs we've chosen would be impossible to release as tapes, indicating that releasing labels, especially Criterion, are finally waking up to the full potential of discs. Laser may still be a niche product—but what a niche! At long last, the good times have begun.

*Gorillas in the Mist* (MCA) earns our Best Disc of the Year designation. Sigourney Weaver's dynamic portrayal of Dian Fossey, the troubled anthropologist who falls in love with a community of apes, is the dramatic fulcrum on which this extraordinary movie rests. But two other factors enhance its appeal on disc. One is the way cinematographer John Seale captures the quality of light in Africa—skies suffused with color, vivid greenery, each frame as beautiful as a painting. The

other is MCA's gutsy transfer, with fully saturated color and attention to multi-layered sonic detail. "I think it's the best transfer we've ever done," says Colleen Benn, director of MCA's videodisc operations. I agree.

*Empire of the Sun* (Warner) is the Best Transfer the year produced. Steven Spielberg's dramatization of J.G. Ballard's novel is a downbeat story with, accordingly, muted colors, yet Warner's scrupulous handling lets the perverse beauty of this confusing masterpiece come through: corpses floating in the Yangtze River, mob chaos in the streets of Shanghai, sunsets in the prison camp where Ballard's semi-fictional protagonist reaches his painful maturity.

Again, carefully mixed and encoded sound combines with high visual quality to make this test-disc-caliber material. Indeed, it's already being used by hardware dealers to demonstrate projection TV and surround sound. Surprisingly,

Pioneer, with a making-of documentary appended—is as detailed and pristine as the CAV version, manufactured by 3M. Honorable mention for transfer quality goes to *The 'Burbs* (MCA), a lowbrow comedy with Tom Hanks and the annoying Corey Feldman. The disc looks and sounds fantastic.

*Ghostbusters* (Criterion) has the best extra material. Although I've never been fond of Ivan Reitman's spook-sparing terminators, Criterion has done their fans a great service by putting together one of the most complete disc supplements since Criterion's disc of *The Magnificent Ambersons*. The disc even has a new wrinkle: before-and-after comparisons of scenes without, then with special effects. Criterion had the cooperation of the movie's producers, giving the deluxe disc label—and now, us—the inside track on its making.

*Sinbad the Sailor* (Turner/Image) is the year's Best Color Classic. Get ready to have your swash buckled as never before as Douglas Fairbanks Jr. and Maureen O'Hara camp it up on Sinbad's eighth voyage, a quest for Alexander the Great's leg-



Balancing Act: Sigourney Weaver and Bryan Brown juggle work and romance in *Gorillas in the Mist*.



endary hidden treasure. This minor RKO gem is pleasurable mainly for its unprecedented saturated Technicolor. If each frame of *Gorillas* looks like a painting, color and composition combine to give each frame of *Sinbad* the splashiness of a comic book. I ran this disc on Proton and Sony XBR Pro monitor/receivers and on a Barco projection TV. It stretched their color capabilities to the limit. This disc will dazzle you.

For the Best Classic Film in black & white, we've chosen Alfred Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* (MCA). Joseph Cotten menaces Teresa Wright in the last major Hitchcock suspenser to hit video. Hitchcock piles on the gathering shadows so heavily that the videotape is—almost—overwhelmed, but the disc is tuned to near perfection. This is yet another case of a tough transfer assignment benefiting from both the superior medium of LaserVision and a video label's laudable will to tweak.

*Lawrence of Arabia* (Criterion/RCA-Columbia) is 1989's Best Restoration. Few buffs had ever seen Sir David Lean's de-



sert epic—starring Peter O'Toole as the English adventurer who turns the tide in the Anglo-Arabian offensive against the German-allied Turks during World War I—as it was intended to be seen. Then film historian Robert A. Harris reconstructed and restored it to Lean's intended 217-minute length and a cherished classic was reborn. Grand emotions (O'Toole's turn is stirring), grand visual compositions (fully visible in the letterboxed transfer) and grand orchestral scoring by Maurice Jarre add up to grand entertainment—and a few surprises.

Imagine my astonishment when the Dolby Spectral remix brought a desert windstorm whooshing into my media room with surround-like vividness. I wasn't even using a surround decoder—just two stereo speakers. Three versions of the disc are available: Criterion's CAV with supplementary stills, Criterion's CLV with more supplementary material, including a making-of documentary, and RCA-Columbia's CLV, which uses the Criterion transfer.

An ambitious Italian telling of an American tale, *We the Living* (Lumivision), earns the Most Improved on Disc Award. Ayn Rand buffs unearthed an instant classic when they found this rather free version of her debut novel, filmed (then banned) in 1942, in Mussolini's Fascist Italy. The beauty of this

## Best Discs of 1989



Joseph Cotten in  
*Shadow of a Doubt*

- *Gorillas in the Mist* (MCA), Best Disc of the Year
- *Empire of the Sun* (Warner), Best Transfer
- *Ghostbusters* (Criterion), Best Supplementary Material
- *Sinbad the Sailor* (Turner/Image), Best Classic Film, Color
- *Shadow of a Doubt* (MCA), Best Classic Film, Black & White
- *Lawrence of Arabia* (Criterion/RCA-Columbia), Best Restoration
- *We the Living* (Lumivision), Most Improved on Disc
- *The Land Before Time* (MCA), Best Animation
- *Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 8 ("Symphony of a Thousand")*, Leonard Bernstein/Vienna Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon/Polygram), Best Music Release
- *Regard for the Planet—50,000 Photographs by Marc Ganger* (Voyager), Best Disc-Only Release
- *A Video Standard* (Reference Recordings), Special Merit Award



**Prime Platters:**  
*Ghostbusters* (top), *The 'Burbs* (above) and *The Land Before Time* (left) rank among the year's outstanding videodiscs.

# WINNING DISCS

story about a woman and two suitors comes not from Rand's objectivist rants—which the makers of this unauthorized dramatization toned down—but from the soft, romantic beauty of the performances by Alida Valli, Rossano Brazzi and Fosco Giachetti and by Giuseppe Caracciolo's cinematography. The latter literally comes into finer focus in the disc version of the film, which I viewed simultaneously with the tape on two screens. Subtle textures and chiaroscuro shadings missing from the tape emerge clearly on disc.

The Best Animation of the year is *The Land Before Time* (MCA). This Don Bluth dinosaur tale is not the equal of Disney's *Fantasia*, which it visually quotes at the outset, or even Bluth's *An American Tail* (MCA), one of last year's disc highlights. But animated features suitable for children—let alone recent ones—are rare, and even a minor-league Bluth is a welcome respite from the usual Saturday-morning fare.

## ONLY ON VIDEO

Gustav Mahler's *Symphony No. 8 ("Symphony of a Thousand")* with Leonard Bernstein conducting the Vienna Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon/PolyGram) is the Best Music Release. "The wunderkind has become a grand old man," as *Newsday* critic Tim Page has written, and here he is conducting Mahler's massive choral work with what is arguably the world's greatest orchestra. This is Leonard Bernstein circa 1975, a younger Lenny than concertgoers see nowadays, but the trademark gesticulations are all here and no



**Earth Child:** A frame from the disc-only *Regard for the Planet—50,000 Photographs* by Marc Garanger.



**Epic Stories:**  
Steven Spielberg's *Empire of the Sun* (top),  
Sir David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia* (right)  
and *We the Living* (above).



less exciting for the relative absence of silver hair. I prefer the CX analog track for its greater smoothness and orchestral blending, but the digital track is more detailed. The Best Disc-Only Release is *Regard for the Planet—50,000 Photographs* by Marc Garanger (Voyager). I can't claim to have watched this commercial photographer's still-frame portfolio all the way through—that would have taken days. Instead, I concentrated on what I've seen recently on my own trips to Amsterdam and London, along with copious selections from Garanger's New York City and Paris. The few thousand frames I saw were enough to convince me that the 78 chapters on this single side of a CAV disc contain enough windows on the world to fascinate viewers for years. It's virtually inexhaustible—and it will never come out on tape because random access of

50,000 still frames is a capability exclusive to disc.

A Video Standard (Reference Recordings) gets a Special Merit Award. For tweakers who adhere to the highest technical standards, this disc offers an abundance of test signals and other video and audio material, much of it recorded using the true digital-recording video formats D1 and D2. Thanks to LaserVision's 425 lines of horizontal resolution and digital soundtrack, the test patterns and tones are as high-fidelity as current consumer technology allows. While not recommended for the technically fainthearted, this disc is the best way to optimize your monitor to deliver the colorful African skies of *Gorillas in the Mist*, the letterboxed vistas of *Lawrence of Arabia* and the sonic grandeur of Bernstein/Mahler. Look, listen, marvel and enjoy. ■

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BY LOU KESTEN

THE YEAR'S  
BEST

# MONDO VIDEO



*From snakes under glass to hams in Japan, 1989's wackiest double takes.*



**Fists of Fury:**  
Not even Nintendo's signing of heavyweight Mike Tyson to a promotional contract could make video stores listen to the game company's pleas to end cartridge rentals.

Like you, there's a little part of us that's happy to see 1989, and by extension the decade, sputter to an end. However momentous the year and the era may have been for home video, it's time to get on with newer things. But not before one last glance back. Video lovers and video hucksters filled the past 12 months with an assortment of weird and wacky deeds. Here, before their memories fade, are the oddest.

#### SNAKES ALIVE!

Britain's Cinema International Corp. promoted the video of Wes Craven's *The Serpent and the Rainbow* by mailing live garter snakes to unsuspecting video store owners and telling them the snakes didn't need to be fed—a claim disproved by those that starved.

#### SCARIEST HORROR VIDEO

Twin Tower's Corey Haim: *Me, Myself and I*, 45 minutes with the jittery, curly-haired Corey. The gifted thespian from such classics as *License to Drive* and *Dream a Little Dream* plays hockey, drives around, talks about girls and explains how to tell the difference between himself and chunky, greasy-haired Corey Feldman.

#### NOW THAT I HAVE AN OSCAR, YOU HAVE TO RESPECT ME

Cher's stomach-turning *If I Could Turn Back Time* video featured the Academy Award-winner prancing around in extremely revealing mesh on the deck of a battleship full of horny marines.

#### NINTENDO MEETS ITS MATCH

Video store owners and consumers alike benefited from the sudden spread of video game rentals. But Nintendo, which apparently isn't making enough money from sales of the Nintendo Entertainment System, tried to have the rentals declared illegal. The battle is still being waged, even as NEC is actually encouraging game rentals for its new TurboGrafx-16 system.



### ZSA ZSA GABOR, FREEDOM FIGHTER

Two California entrepreneurs released a 90-minute videocassette featuring highlights from Zsa Zsa Gabor's trial for slapping a Beverly Hills police officer.

### I DON'T HAVE AN OSCAR, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO RESPECT ME YET

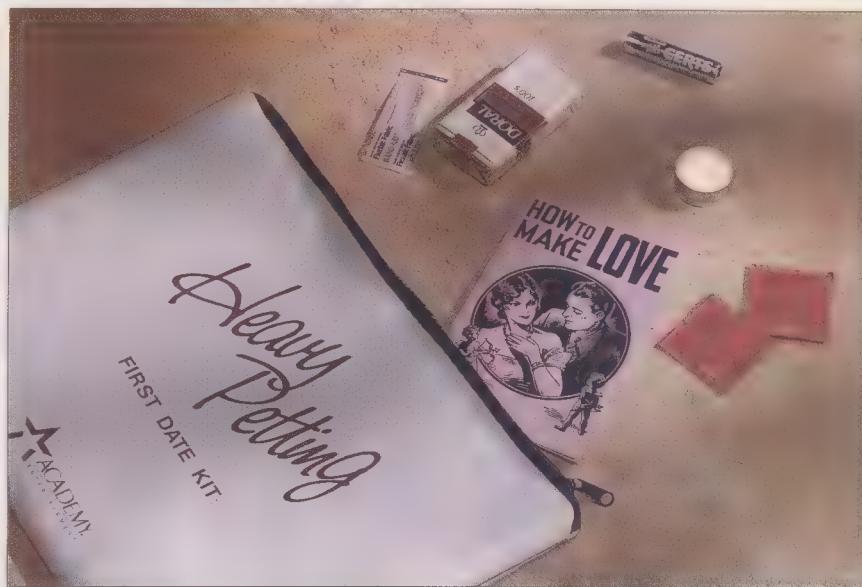
Madonna dancing in front of burning crosses. Madonna making love to a re-animated saint. Madonna clearing an innocent black man of rape charges. Madonna developing stigmata. Madonna blowing a lucrative endorsement



contract with Pepsi. About the only thing her *Like a Prayer* video didn't have was Madonna naked and chained to a bed—oh, but her *Express Yourself* video corrected that oversight.

### UNJUST DESSERTS

Errol Morris directed the documentary *The Thin Blue Line*, which questioned the guilt of convicted murderer Randall Dale Adams. Shortly after his release from a Texas penitentiary, thanks largely to the impact of the film, Adams sued Morris for profits from the film.



### HOUSE PETS

Academy Home Entertainment's press kit for *Heavy Petting* included a candle, two condoms (Trojans, of course), a pack of Certs, a *How to Make Love* book, and, presumably for "rough sex" cases, a Band-Aid.

### MUSH CAPADES

American Express' TV commercial showing a tow-headed tyke inserting a spoonful of oatmeal into Dad's VCR apparently inspired a rash of copycat attacks.

### THE OTHER 43% IS HARVEY FIERSTEIN

According to a survey of videocassette buyers reported in *Video Week*, "30% of video shoppers were males; 27% females."

### SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS FOR PRIME TIME LIVE

Suggestively clad roller skaters of both genders battled it out in the syndicated *RollerGames*. The show melded MTV-style rock videos with roller derby, with charming additions like the 14-foot Wall of Death and the Alligator Pit.

### EVERYONE'S A CRITIC

Former House Speaker Jim Wright, who was under investigation for alleged ethics violations, endorsed while he was Speaker the Pacific Institute's 21-cassette series on personal and family development, calling it "a

marvelously useful home video tool." Wright's wife, Betty, worked as a consultant for Pacific.

### CHANNEL DUMB

Former *Esquire* publisher Christopher Whittle offered to donate TV sets to thousands of classrooms—provided they were used as vehicles for *Channel One*, his attempt to deliver advertising to captive audiences of schoolchildren. So far, few schools have taken up his offer.

### STRANGE BREW

American TV viewers were subjected to former journalist Linda Ellerbee pitching Maxwell House coffee with NBC weather wacko Willard Scott. Every single critic bemoaning Ellerbee's sell-out ended his or her column with "And so it goes."

### HAMBO: FIRST STUD, PART I

A Japanese ad featured Sylvester Stallone dressed in a tux bearing a gift for his date: a package of processed ham. The slogan: "Ito Ham is so delicious that it is the gift of love." Unfortunately, Stallone stipulated in his contract that the ads cannot appear in the U.S.



BY RODERICK WOODCOCK

# DREAM MACHINE FOR THE '90S

*Our Wish List  
of 25 VCR features  
we'd love to see.*

**N**obody's perfect, including VCR manufacturers. We love the machines they give us, but we think they could give us more. Things like remotes with LCD monitors, built-in head cleaners and ghost busting circuits. Simple things. With that as an overture, here's our VCR Wish List for 1990: 25 features we're dying to have. This time we're going easy on the backroom boys who design our playthings. In past years, we were far tougher. In 1985, for example, we asked for 99 (that's right, 99) new features. Some we got, some we didn't. But a look at today's VCRs reveals that many of our fondest feature dreams have come true. So, in addition to our new list, here are ten we asked for—and got (see overleaf).

Now it's time for *Video Magazine* readers to get into the act. Send us your VCR dreams, all those features you've been yearning for. We'd love to publish yet another dream-machine list.

## 1. "BEEPER" REMOTE

What happens when your VCR remote disappears somewhere into the couch cushions? You tear the place apart looking for it, that's what. Wouldn't it be nice if you could calmly "call" the lost remote by simply pressing a button on the VCR? Or maybe we need a sound-recognition chip inside the remote that causes it to beep or whistle when we clap our hands.

## 2. OVERSIZED REMOTE BUTTONS

Not everyone has the keen eyesight or athletic dexterity to read and manipulate the multitude of tiny buttons featured on many remotes. Why not larger remotes—say the size of a VHS cassette—with bigger, easy-to-read buttons. Our mother would go for one.

## 3. REMOTE WITH VIDEO MONITOR

Think of it. A cordless remote with built-in LCD TV screen. With onscreen programming, the VCR could be programmed without even turning on the TV set. And, with an adequate range, you'd be able to tote the remote all over the house, watching the tape of your choice. Sort of Video To Go.

## 4. BUILT-IN VCR MONITOR

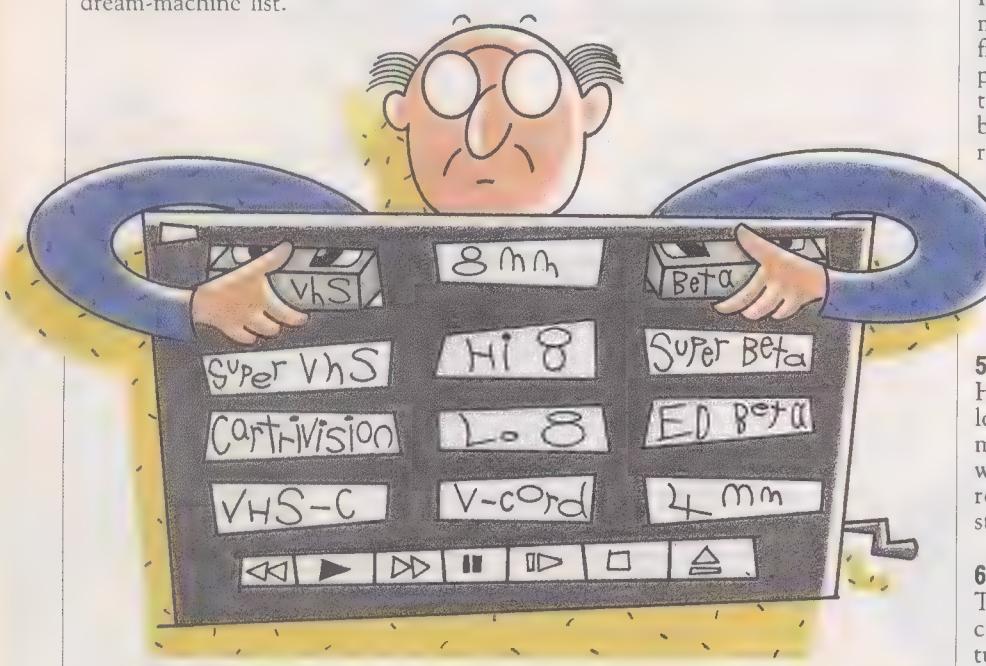
If we can't have a remote with built-in monitor, let's at least mount one on the front panel of the VCR. Ideally, it would pop out for ambulatory viewing or to be taken on camcorder shoots. Snapped back into the VCR, it could be used for rapid onscreen programming, tracking adjustments and so on. Philips showed VCRs with front-mounted LCD screens at the recent Audio-Video Fair in Berlin (see "Berlin Diary," Dec. '89). They could show up in this country in the near future.

## 5. WIRELESS AUDIO TRANSMITTER

Households with video insomniacs will love this one: a transmitter that transmits the audio signal from the VCR to a wireless headset. No more disturbing the rest of the family with TV audio or straining to listen to muted sound.

## 6. HIGH-SPEED REWIND

Twiddling your thumbs while the VCR crawls through the rewind process is torture. But it can be done in less than two





minutes (that's how long it takes the Mitsubishi U71), so why don't other manufacturers speed things up by following suit?

#### 7. ONE-TOUCH ERASE

It can be unsettling. Just as the climactic and moving scene from *Casablanca* fades from view, a previously recorded deodorant commercial suddenly slithers onto the screen and shatters the moment. If you could erase the tape before recording, it wouldn't happen. It's relatively easy to do. Most VCRs incorporate an electromagnet that erases tape just before it's recorded. The magnet turns off during playback. If that electromagnet could be turned on during fast forward and/or rewind (for full-load VCRs), tapes would automatically be erased.

#### 8. FRAME COUNTERS

New VHS decks with half- and full-load transports sport handy real-time second, minute and hour readouts. Thanks. But let's take that next step and introduce VHS frame counters. Since there are 30 frames per second, offering a means of counting them can help. Sony does it with Beta. Now let's see it on VHS.

#### 9. VIDEO CONFIDENCE HEADS

Confidence heads do what their name implies: give VCR tapers the confidence that they're getting what they want. Confidence (or monitor) heads pick up

signals as they're recorded, then play them back through a viewfinder or a monitor. If taping problems develop, they can be spotted immediately. They're now found on many professional models, and adding them to consumer decks would be simple. Only two of the four heads on a double azimuth head drum are used at one time. The other two could become confidence heads.

#### 10. USER-FRIENDLY MANUALS

Of course it's tough to write a readable instruction manual for a product as complex as the VCR. But, as simplified manuals in other product areas prove, it can be done. VCR owners aren't video engineers, and most don't want to be. We need simpler manuals, written in far simpler terms.

#### 11. COLOR BAR GENERATOR

Accurate color balance is essential for camcorder use, but equally important for TV viewing; inaccurate adjustment of color tint controls can put a real damper on the videotape viewing experience. Color bar generators can now be built into a chip, so why don't we put that chip into the next generation of VCRs and camcorders.

#### 12. ANALOG CLOCK/TIMER

Lots of us like to look at old-fashioned analog clocks, and digitally accurate

time can also be displayed in analog form. So why not give us both, the way Toshiba does. When the clock on its SV-970 is set, for example, a picture of an analog clock appears on the TV screen. It's very comforting.

#### 13. RENTAL-TAPE SWITCH

Tapes that have been played a lot tend to wear faster. That's the reason a new JVC deck comes with a rental position switch. This boosts the signal level slightly, automatically compensating for the reduced signal level on the tape caused by repeated playback. Given the lousy quality of many rental tapes, we'd like to see the feature become more widespread.

#### 14. BUILT-IN HEAD CLEANER

Some industrial VCRs feature automatic head cleaners: foam discs that momentarily contact the rotating heads everytime the tape threads or unthreads. Similar devices could easily be built into consumer VCRs (Sony's GV-8 Video Walkman already has one). A companion "dirty head" indicator warning if one or more of the video heads has become clogged could also come in handy. ▶



# DREAM MACHINE

## Ten Goodies We Asked For—And Got



### 1. SKIPSCAN

We asked for this feature so we could figure out where we were during rapid fast forward and reverse play. We got it years ago on Beta machines, and now we're seeing it on full-load VHS machines, including models from Mitsubishi and JVC, and on many 8mm VCRs and camcorders.

### 2. BEEPER FEEDBACK

This was so we could hear audible confirmation of activated functions, a particularly helpful feature when using a remote control. It showed up on table models and portables several years ago and is now making an appearance on camcorders. JVC's GR-S707U Super VHS-C camcorder, for example, emits a single beep when taping starts and two beeps when it stops.

### 3. MULTIPLE A/V INPUT/OUTPUT JACKS

This was added to our wish list for obvious reasons, and now they're rapidly becoming standard fare on higher-end models.

### 4. FLYING ERASE HEADS

When we issued a call for flying erase heads many years ago, they were still a somewhat exotic member of the professional editing family. Now, rotary FE heads—which remove old video signals far more precisely than fixed heads—are coming home to a broad range of consumer decks and camcorders.

### 5. REPEAT PLAY

Only two VCRs with repeat play were available when we first asked for this. Now it's available on a range of decks, including models from Toshiba, Mitsubishi and Sharp. With repeat play, a VCR can be set to automatically rewind and replay a given tape segment.

### 6. ONSCREEN PROGRAMMING

We asked for it, we got it. From an esoteric high-end feature a few years ago, it is now becoming commonplace. Well done.

### 7. SEPARATE RECORD/PLAYBACK HEADS

We're making progress. Midrange and deluxe decks now routinely use "double azimuth" four-head systems, offering superior recording and playback in the SP and EP modes. The loser has been the midrange LP speed, which isn't part of the S-VHS format; many VHS decks now offer only LP playback, often without special effects.

### 8. SHARPNESS CONTROL

Not having a separate control for sharpness often meant living with grainy or fuzzy pictures. Now personal sharpness preference can be matched by adjusting the sharpness control found on many VCRs.

### 9. 99-EVENT/ONE-YEAR PROGRAMMING

We thought we were joking. But it happened, essentially putting an end to programming time as a competitive weapon in VCR wars.

### 10. AUTOMATIC DATING

We asked for it as a deck feature. Now we're getting it in both decks and camcorders. The auto date feature, as found on JVC's new HR-S8000, automatically imprints the date at the start of a new recording.

### 15. HEAD-HOURS METER

Another feature easily borrowed from the industrial video domain is the "hours meter," a small gauge that measures the length of time the video head drum spins. A means of measuring wear and tear on video heads would help.

### 16. INCREASED TRACKING RANGE

Many VCR users prefer the EP speed. Unfortunately, that's also the speed most difficult to play back on other VCRs. Widening the tracking range would help. Electronic tracking control, providing a continuous adjustment range rather than a limited amount of correction left or right of the normal setting, would do the trick.

### 17. TWIN HEADPHONE JACKS

Jacks that don't fit other jacks can be annoying, and it shouldn't happen with VCRs. But some models use the quarter-inch headphone jack size, while others favor the smaller eighth-inch size. Mounting both jack sizes side-by-side would quickly solve the problem and make for far easier listening.

### 18. REMOTE STEREO CONTROLS

...And let's keep the fussy audiophiles happy by adding left and right channel volume and balance controls to the remote. Next we'll be asking for remote graphic equalizer controls.

*continued on page 129*



—RW

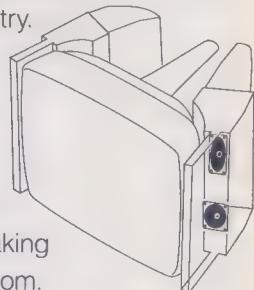
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BY JIM SULSKI

# POSSESSED

*How tape collectors pursue the joys of their fatal attraction.*

Some people collect works of art, others butterflies. And then there are those who collect video.

Sure, just about everybody saves a copy of that favorite *Cheers* or *L.A. Law* episode. And, yes, some people even collect copies of space shuttle launchings. But how many have nearly every television show featuring actor Robert Fuller in their tape library? Or rare and long-forgotten video performances of the singing group the Four Aces? Or thousands of episodes of adventure shows from the '60s?

Meet the video collector, a product of the 1980s' home video explosion. "The collector's market is now probably ten times greater than it was ten years ago, thanks to the availability of videotape," says Donald Key, publisher of *The Big Reel*, a magazine for collectors and traders. "At one time, we were all collecting 16mm and 8mm films and posters and books. Videotape opened up the market."

Video collectors are a fervent bunch. They literally travel the globe for their video grails. "In any serious collector's home, it's not unusual to find 500 to 1,000 tapes on a shelf," says Key. "Some never even watch what they tape. They just want to have it in their possession."

"I know the collector's mind and mentality," adds Brian Bukantis, publisher of *Movie Collector's World*. "They really want to collect everything they can on a certain television series or on an actor."

How fanatical are video collectors? Walt Gollender, a New Jersey talent scout and music manager, says he has spent thousands of hours amassing and cataloguing his nine-tape collection of Four Aces' performances, mostly from 1950s television shows. "I'm beyond maniacal," he says. "I'm absolutely insane and proud to be crazy. If you told me you found the Aces' appearance on *The Patti Page Show*, I would hop on a bus and be there tonight with checkbook in hand."

*'I'm beyond  
maniacal. I'm  
insane & proud  
to be crazy.'*

Christopher Brown of Ajax, Ontario, often brings his VCR when traveling in the United States. "I tape from my hotel room, looking for shows not playing in my area," he says. "I make sure the hotel has a wide cable selection. I plug in my machine and tape all night." Brown, an accountant at an art gallery, collects action television shows from the '60s, such as *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *The Time Tunnel*, *The Saint* and *The Avengers*. He estimates he has close to 600 tapes.

Maine resident Lois Oster collects

TV programs featuring Robert Fuller. Oster has more than 50 tapes of the actor, including all 124 episodes of *Laramie*, a full season of *Wagon Train* plus countless episodes of *Emergency* and other shows.

No two video collectors are alike. Most are interested in one or two specific television shows, actors or genres. "I know people who have spent years tracking down material in a particular vein," says Diane Albert, who publishes *TV Collectors Magazine* with her husband, Stephen. "They never give up."

Although video collecting is highly individualistic, sometimes there are other factors that prompt a collector's interest. For example, the death last year of Lucille Ball increased the interest in her work, and the big-screen release of *Batman* encouraged collection of the two *Batman* movie serials from the '40s.

## DUEL IN THE SUN

But there can also be no apparent rhyme or reason to a collector's passion. For example, the late actor Peter Duel, who starred in the TV series *Alias Smith and Jones*, is a hot commodity. "All of a sudden everybody is interested in Peter Duel," said Albert. "Three different people are running fan clubs for him. These things come and go. I don't know how long this fad will last."

Most video collectors ply their passions through the pages of such video collector magazines as *TV Collectors*, *Movie Collector's World* and *The Big Reel* (see sidebar). Hundreds of videoholics



# POSSESSED

'People spend years tracking material. They never give up.'

## How To Find Rare Tapes

Whether you're searching for Shangri-La (or at least the footage left out of *Lost Horizon*), Ann-Margret's first film, Bob Dylan's appearance on *The Steve Allen Show* or the compleat *Kojak*, video collecting is as easy a passion to ignite as it is addictive. The simplest way to begin tracking down a particular tape is to place an advertisement in one or more of several video collector magazines. Most of these publications accept classified and display advertising and carry dozens of ads from dealers looking to sell thousands of video titles, as well as such memorabilia as posters, books and scripts.

These publications are hard to find at newsstands. Several are only available by subscription. But they reach like-minded collectors. If you place an ad, describe what you're looking for. Be as specific as possible and list what you are willing to trade. If you don't have much to offer, you can agree to pay the cost of blank tape and postage. Or you may want to offer to tape a syndicated show that's available in your area. Here's a roundup of the leading collector magazines and their specialties:

• **TV Collectors Magazine.** Geared toward TV shows of the past. Recent articles include a tribute to Lucille Ball, a profile on the TV program *Bridget Loves Bernie* and indexes to TV series. A one-year, six-issue subscription costs \$15; sample issues are \$3 each. Each subscription includes a free classified ad. Display ads cost up to \$20. Write to: Box 188, Needham, MA 02192; 508-238-1170.

• **The Big Reel.** Emphasizes videos of films from the '30s and '40s and related items prized for their nostalgic value. Many of its advertisements are from dealers, including those for poster, book and magazine memorabilia. A one-year, 12-issue subscription costs \$20; classifieds

run 10 cents a word. Write to: Route 3, Box 83, Madison, NC 27025; 919-427-5850.

• **Movie Collector's World.** Devotes about a third of its space to video collecting. Recent articles include a look at *The Rockford Files*, Houdini's film activities and reviews of video releases. A one-year, 52-issue subscription costs \$25, with sample copies sent on request. Classified ad rates run from 10 to 30 cents a word. Write to: Box 309, Fraser, MI 48026.

• **Filmfax.** Editor Michael Stein says Filmfax tries to document film and videomaking. Recent articles include a history of Batman in film and television, a look at the Marx Brothers' lost TV pilot *Deputy Seraph*, and an interview with Hollywood stunt gorilla Steve Calvert. A one-year, six-issue subscription is \$25; classifieds cost \$1 a word. Write to: Box 1900, Evanston, IL 60294.

• **Goldmine.** Specializes in music-oriented videos, with articles on everything from heavy metal to country music performers. A one-year, 26-issue subscription is \$35; classifieds cost 15 cents a word. Write to: 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990.

—JS



search for their next fix by taking out "wanted" ads, such as the two gentlemen from California who are "looking for behind-the-scenes footage of *The Brady Bunch*," and the Maryland man who wants the first five episodes of the TV series *Movin' On*. Then there's the Washington state woman who wants any video featuring actor Robert Ito, who played Sam Fujiyama on *Quincy, M.E.*

To acquire their treasures, many collectors trade videos with each other. Others buy from the specialized video dealers advertising in the magazines. Even though taping and trading certain videos may be considered bootlegging, "nobody is getting rich off the collectible video market," says Bukantis. "The only money exchanged is usually small fees for tape and postage."

Collectors often become hooked on certain videos because of emotional attachments, say collecting experts. "Everyone has his or her own reasons, but I think it's basically nostalgia," muses Bukantis. "Maybe they're tired of the fare on TV today and want something they remember as good."

"It's something people latch onto in childhood — something that touched them when they were kids," says Albert, who notes that some older video collectors started by collecting records and movie memorabilia. "Collecting is just fun. I know a reader who loves westerns because the men wear tight pants."

The seeds of Gollender's passion were planted by the Four Aces in 1951, when as a young boy he heard them sing on local radio stations. "When I saw them on their first television shows in the 1950s, I said, 'Wow, look at that. They move around and use choreography.' I just wanted to be an Ace."

Oster became enamored of Robert Fuller in 1959, as a 12-year-old watching *Laramie*. "I just liked *Laramie* and it never stopped," she said.

Editor Albert even met her future husband and publisher through her love of old video. She was hooked on the syndicated show *Rescue 8*. "I lived for that show, and I was trying to find copies of it," recalled Albert. "I saw an ad for *TV Collectors* and because it was a local phone call away, I decided to give the magazine a call." Her husband-to-be

# Make your video copies better than your originals...and then some.



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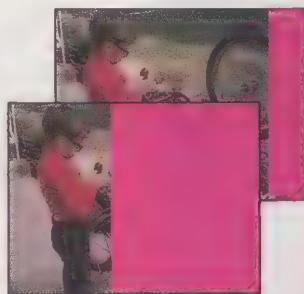
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While certain Vivanco models are also capable of de-scrambling copy-protection systems, they are intended only for personal viewing of pre-recorded videotapes. They should not be used, nor are they intended to be used, in copying of any pre-recorded copyrighted materials. Such use may constitute a copyright infringement.

had no *Rescue 9* episodes on hand. Instead he brought other vintage TV tapes to her house. "We've been together since that moment," she recalls.

Albert insists avid video collectors are not "couch potatoes with no lives. Most have families and good jobs. Our readers are college professors, doctors, schoolteachers, students and truck drivers. They have a generalized interest in an actor or a show. It's their hobby. They don't even watch current TV."

### CHANNEL HOPPING

Collectors admit few limits to their passions. Many have even reached overseas for videos. Oster went to England, where a couple of Fuller's shows were airing. "I got copies of the shows and had them transferred from the English PAL system to the American NTSC system," she says. "Some video firms are reluctant to transfer because of copyright problems. So you have to explain that the shows are not for commercial purposes."

Gollender's phone bill hit record highs in a search for South American television performances of the Four Aces from the 1980s. "A Spanish network sent me one show the Aces did," recalls Gollender. "The president of the company thought three other shows featuring the Aces were lost in an earthquake in Paraguay. But I kept going to producers involved with the shows. One steered me to the import/export director of the network. He wrote back and said the three tapes thought lost in the earthquake were sitting on a shelf in his office!"

Although collecting can be frustrat-

ing, collectors say that every once in a while, a video angel smiles on them. For Oster, it was cable's Family Channel, formerly the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), which was playing episodes of Fuller's *Laramie*.

"I was in touch with a programming person constantly," recalls Oster. "One

day, he called at noon and said the CBN Theater anthology series at 1 p.m. was running an episode with Bob Fuller in it. It was a show I was looking for, but I didn't know it was part of that series."

Gollender had a similar experience. "One morning, I got a call from a young man in New Jersey who saw one of my ads. He was at a flea market and found a can of film that had half of a Steve Allen *Songs for Sale* show that included the Four Aces. This was a real needle in the haystack." The caller not only sent Gollender the treasure, but refused to be reimbursed for the cost of the film and postage.

In this mad pursuit, there is little that will slow collectors down. Even the commercial release of former collectibles, like *Star Trek* and *The Honeymooners*, does not dampen a collector's spirit. "There's always something a collector is looking for, because there's always something that companies don't release: outtakes, lost episodes, oddities and rarities," notes Bukantis. "A *Star Trek* fan may look for *Star Trek* bloopers. Some collectors look for anything with Leonard Nimoy or William Shatner. One thing leads to another."

### GETTING STARTED

For those who wish to start a video collection, the experts agree, the best bet is to place a "wanted" ad in a video collector's magazine. Responses can lead to further sources. "Eventually, you wind up contacting the bigger video collectors to see if they have what you're trying to find," explains Oster. "If they don't have it, they may suggest someone

continued on page 130

### \* LATE NIGHT VIEWERS \* MOVIE ADDICTS \*

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BY LAWRENCE B. JOHNSON

# TOKYO TECH

*What's hot in Japan? A special report from two top shows.*

A bright-eyed girl at the Panasonic booth sported a lavender button proclaiming "Dramatic Inner Resort." The Japanese have a singular way of stringing English words together. But no one needed to ask what the phrase meant. It was defined in the faces of teen-agers who roamed the Japan Audio Fair in clusters, agog at the shining hardware on display, some of it representing video and audio advances we'll be hearing about a lot more in coming months.

The five-day, October exposition in Tokyo was followed a week later by an even bigger spectacle in Osaka: the Japan Electronics Show. Between them, these annual audio/video extravaganzas provide a dramatic window for new products soon to be seen in the American market. Soon, of course, can mean weeks, months or longer. But for the enthusiastic Japanese, the fairs mean new toys now. Better still, unlike the Consumer Electronics Shows in the United States, those in Japan are open to the public. And the public, especially young males, turns out in a big way.

One of the hottest spots was Panasonic's THX demonstration room, where crowds queued up hour after hour to sample the magic that George Lucas and the folks at Technics, Panasonic's hi-fi division, will soon bring to home theater buffs. THX is a surround-sound system developed by Lucasfilm to create



**Tokyo Vista:** Arching entrance to the Audio Fair.

a highly controlled audio environment in movie theaters. The idea of home THX (the name comes from Lucas' first feature film, *THX 1138*) is to preserve the impact and reality of true surround



**Trigger Happy:**  
Pistol grip for 8mm  
camcorders.

sound while viewing videotapes or discs in a living room.

It's a complex system requiring not only a signal controller but an integrated group of dedicated loudspeakers for front and rear stereo as well as a center channel. You can't mix and match your favorite speakers. It's a package, buyer take all. The THX home system is nearly ready for the Japanese market but scarcely past the pondering stage for the U.S., according to a Technics

spokesman. The bright side is that eager Americans will have time to fatten their bank accounts before THX arrives. The introductory price in Japan is expected to be around \$40,000.

Home theaters play a major role in Japan's domestic consumer A/V market, although not with the big-screen dimensions that seem to loom ever larger in stateside showrooms. It's all a matter of scale, as one Japanese marketing expert puts it. While the average American family roams about in 1,800 square feet of living space, the typical dwelling in Japan is closer to 800 square feet. That's why "midi" hi-fi components are snapped up by the Japanese and virtually ignored by Americans, and why Mitsubishi acknowledges its new 70-inch projection TV—an eye-popping prospect from Texas to Montana—will not change the lives of apartment dwellers in Kyoto or Okayama. ▶

# TOKYO TECH

However, the technology behind sharper, brighter projection TV pictures has given Japanese consumers an array of beautiful options in, say, 27-inch monitors. The Tokyo fair displayed a vast array of fine-quality midsize monitors, many bearing brands unknown in this country. But the wide-eyed youths, a dominating presence at the show, crowded most eagerly around the smallest wonders. Sony drew oohs and ahs with a Watchman-size color LCD monitor that's apparently destined solely for domestic consumption. Asked whether it might be shipped our way, a spokesman for Sony's U.S. video division responded with a meaningful silence that, freely translated, suggests we're not likely to see it soon, if at all.

At Panasonic, a couple of unusual VCRs that will come to the U.S. were being aired for domestic reaction. For lack of a sexier name, Panasonic calls one new VCR the "Full/Compact"; that is, it's a "fully compatible" machine that accepts both standard and Compact VHS tapes without an adapter. It even plays Super VHS and S-VHS-C tapes. All playback and transport functions adjust automatically according to the format of the tape that's inserted.

"It should be particularly attractive to video enthusiasts who like to record

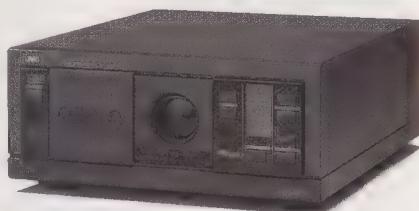


**Chip Trip:** Prototype camcorder with extra CCD.

in the field with a VHS-C camcorder but who edit and watch tapes on a tabletop VCR," explained a spokesman at the show. Delivery to the American market is expected to be sometime this fall, although that could change. Meanwhile, Panasonic is open to suggestions for a catchier handle. (If readers have any ideas, send them to us and we'll pass them along.)

Panasonic already knows what it's going to call another new creation: the

**Ready to Roll:**  
Panasonic's F/C VCR (right) accepts VHS and VHS-C cassettes, while JVC's new LCD projector (below) may be the sharpest yet.



**Universal VCR.** The Universal VCR has conversion circuitry that permits it to record television signals in any of the world's three major standards—NTSC, used primarily in the U.S. and Japan; PAL, used mainly in the United Kingdom and Western Europe; and SECAM, the standard for France and Soviet bloc countries. During playback, the VCR digitally converts the signals of one broadcast standard to those of another. Like the F/C VCR, the Universal was previewed in the U.S. at last June's Consumer Electronics Show. It should arrive here late this year.

## NEW AND IN THE WORKS

Several more design twists surfaced in Tokyo. Sony displayed an even smaller version of its innovative, already diminutive Video Walkman. This model combines the three-inch LCD screen of the first version with the tiny FL tape transport that made possible Sony's CCD-TR5 camcorder. It's unlikely to come here because Sony thinks its screen is too small for American tastes. Panasonic turned up with a new version of its evolving beam matrix TV. The final form of this new type of flat picture tube will be less than two inches, and could be as large as the 14-inch prototype Panasonic displayed.

In camcorders, Sharp displayed a new 8mm model featuring a 16x zoom lens and a color LCD viewfinder, while

JVC showed a prototype of an S-VHS-C camcorder that weighed less than two pounds. JVC also showed a working model of the Concept C miniature component system—with S-VHS-C deck, LCD monitor and color camera—that it flashed before startled eyes at CES. Panasonic displayed an S-VHS camcorder that uses two CCD chips for extra resolution and light sensitivity. It also unveiled a variation on its PV-S160 full-size camcorder, adding a zoom microphone to the zoom lens already on the American model.

In the embryonic field of still video, Fuji introduced a camera, similar in appearance to Canon's Xaphot, that uses a credit-card sized "image memory card" instead of the more familiar two-inch floppy disc. Fuji also showed a still video recording deck that accepts both the card and a DAT cassette, which can store about 1,000 still images, as well as a portable Video Printer. About the size of

*continued on page 130*

**Go Fish:**  
Prototype of an underwater camcorder with color viewfinder.



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### **Introducing the world's first Digital Signal Processing Receiver.**

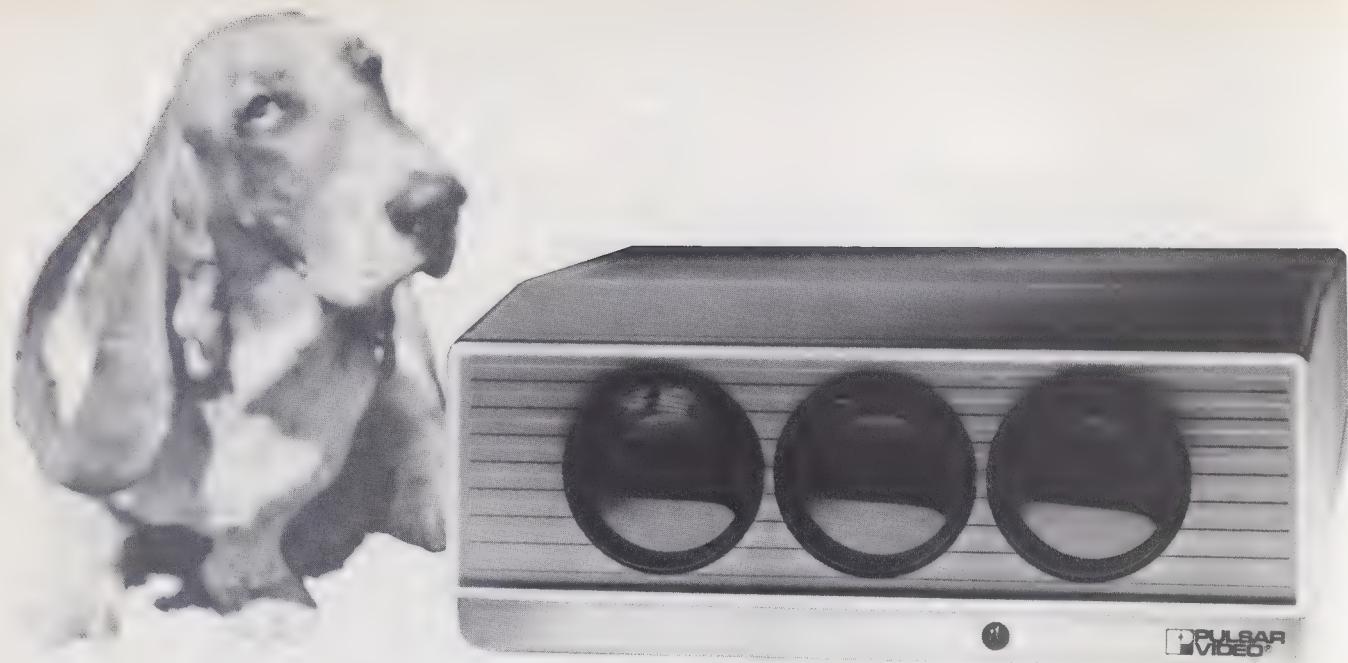
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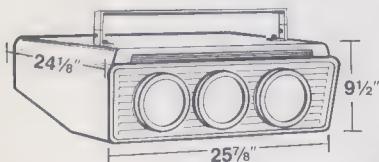
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# PROGRAMMING

## Films of the Month



### New York Stories

1989. In 3 parts. "Life Lessons": Nick Nolte, Rosanna Arquette; wr. Richard Price, dir. Martin Scorsese. "Life Without Zoe": Heather McComb, Giancarlo Giannini, Talia Shire; dir. Francis Coppola. "Oedipus Wrecks": Woody Allen, May Questel, Mia Farrow, Julie Kavner; wr./dir. Allen. 125m. Hi Price n.a. Disney. V image: good.

### When Harry Met Sally...

1989. Billy Crystal, Meg Ryan; wr. Nora Ephron, dir. Rob Reiner. 96m. Hi cc \$89.98. V image: good.

Hollywood has a new take on romance in the Big Apple. Forget chilled wineglasses in Central Park and stolen kisses inside the Statue of Liberty — you stand a better chance of seeing Frankie and Annette surfing down the Hudson River. As urban sprawl butts up against the 21st century, average folk are lucky if the rigors of city life leave them with

enough energy to limp on to the next relationship.

New York Stories consists of three vignettes linked mainly by their common location. The segments vary widely in tone, but all three heavyweight directors — Scorsese, Allen and Coppola — demonstrate just how far they're willing to go toward romanticizing Fun City.

In "Life Lessons," longstanding urban realist Martin Scorsese and master scriptwriter Richard Price (*The Color of Money*) use the downtown art scene as a knotty surface for their portrait of a corroding relationship that involves renowned painter Lionel Dobie (Nick Nolte) and his disenchanted concubine Paulette (Rosanna Arquette). As the artist's celebrity becomes bloated beyond appeal by his own insecurity, Paulette tries to bail out — which is easier said than done in an environment as swampy as the streets of Soho and with a mentor as calculatedly messed up as Lionel Dobie. "Life Lessons" almost cries out for more screen time, as the potential of Dobie's bait-and-switch approach to



Once Upon a Time:  
Woody Allen, Mae  
Questel and Mia Far-  
row in "Oedipus  
Wrecks" (far left),  
Heather McComb and  
friends in "Life Without  
Zoe" (above) and  
Rosanna Arquette in "Life  
Lessons" (left), all from  
New York Stories.

courtship only comes to light at the tail-end of the story.

The characters that inhabit Francis Coppola's "Life Without Zoe" are no more charming than their grizzled brethren in "Life Lessons." The sad thing is, Coppola hopes that they'll charm you to death. In what seems to be an unwitting clone of the Eloise book series, "Life Without Zoe" cooks up an unsavory souffle of excess. This florid adventure about a Park Avenue prepubescent bubbles like one of Ivana Trump's childhood fantasies. Zoe (Heather McComb) shows plenty of spunk as the independent child of two missed-connection jet-setters (Giancarlo Giannini and Talia Shire), but it's the spunk only money can buy. The effect borders on offensive as this precocious child whines about the cost of cab fares and doles out charity to the homeless in the form of chocolate kisses.

Still precocious at 54, Woody Allen writes himself a ticket to the Twilight Zone in "Oedipus Wrecks." The concept of media intrusion reaches new

# Films of the Month

heights with the story of Sheldon Mills (Allen), a reluctant mama's boy who suffers the public indignity of seeing his mother transformed into a verbose addition to New York's skyline. But, in the true spirit of Woody, the real story can be found in how the other women in his life (Mia Farrow and Julie Kavner) respond to this metaphysical mystery.

The first 20 minutes of *When Harry Met Sally...* would have made a perfect New York Story. During a marathon drive from Chicago to Greenwich Village, Sally Albright (Meg Ryan) learns that Harry Burns (Billy Crystal) is a garrulous lout whose avowed sentiment is that "No man can be friends with a wo-

man that he finds attractive. He always wants to have sex with her."

Much to Harry's chagrin, Sally turns out to be a naive control-freak who brags about having "just as much of a dark side as the next person" but prizes passion a lot less than security. They part with a sullen handshake in front of the Washington Square arch, and one actually says, "Have a nice life." When their paths cross five years later, Harry doesn't even recognize Sally. And Sally is more than happy to let him walk on.



**The Dating Game:**  
Billy Crystal (left),  
Bruno Kirby and Carrie  
Fisher (top) and Meg  
Ryan (above) all search  
for that special some-  
one in *When Harry Met  
Sally...*

Which figures as the last really honest moment in the film.

From that point on, Harry and Sally bump into each other with the synchronicity of colliding steamrollers. Eventually they accumulate enough relationship-traumas to develop a bizarre emotional landfill of common ground. Over the course of ten years' time, Harry's and Sally's relationship skids from platonic to sexual to loving. But their progress seems little more than a zombielike stagger as they lurch toward their inevitable union.

The faint grasp that *When Harry Met Sally...* has on emotional bonding is betrayed by the fact that its whole publici-

*'Rob Reiner's film is too delicate to survive the non-stop quipping of Billy Crystal.'*

ty campaign has revolved around the infamous "orgasm" scene, in which Sally demonstrates in a crowded diner the art of faking orgasm. Good schtick, perhaps. But when the character we know (up to that point) as Sally Albright begins writhing and moaning in public, it should be more indicative of a nervous breakdown than a worldly breakthrough.

The creative combination of showbiz kids Nora Ephron and Rob Reiner has only catalyzed the pair's commercial instincts. As an author, Ephron is gifted at constructing tight, funny situations and the dialogue to support them. But her work is too delicate to survive a lot of improv, and it would appear that director Reiner allowed the structure of *When Harry Met Sally...* to be gutted by Crystal's non-stop quipping. When the time comes to roll the cameras for *When Harry Met Sally... II: The Seventeen Year Itch*, I hope they let Albert Brooks direct.

—John Walker

# Strange Adventures



**Space and Time Cadets:**  
John Neville in peril as the incredible Baron Munchausen (left) and Jeff Goldblum as the blue alien in *Earth Girls Are Easy*.

The long, strange trip has always been a trusty cinematic concept. But as we perch on the dawn of the '90s, the worthiness of the vehicle determines, now more than ever, whether or not a movie will ever reach its intended destination.

*The Navigator* is a stunning piece of work that may spearhead a new genre: the tragi-fantasy. Starting out in 1348 Cumbria, the titular character is the child Griffin (McFarlane), a visionary whose dream holds the key to saving his village from the Black Plague's impending ravages. Cloaked, hooded and Hobbit-like, the men of Griffin's village follow his intuition, which leads them from 14th-century England to 20th-century New Zealand via a cave that cuts through the core of the earth.

As if that weren't enough of a journey, once in the new world they must piece together the puzzle of Griffin's dream, an interpretation made even more difficult by the barrage of modern technology they encounter. Crossing a highway becomes a terrifying adventure. A TV newscaster is the devil himself. But the triumph of *The Navigator* is that these encounters are not bloated into slapstick adventures. Under the direction of Vincent Ward, *The Navigator* has the integrity to embrace the grimness

that permeates its shocking, stinging conclusion. This is not a film for young children.

*The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* reverses the priorities. Like many of Terry Gilliam's post-Python endeavors, *Munchausen* is a barely integrated compilation of light and dark humor. What begins on stage as a fictitious tribute to the Baron evolves into a "real-life" adventure as the real Baron carries a young companion into a sequence of bizarre situations that include everyone from the king of the moon (Williams) to Venus on the half-shell (Uma Thurman). The Baron's mission is to save a European city from the capricious bloodlust of a Turkish sultan, and he

pulls together a band of silly, super-powered pals to help him. But are they silly enough?

One gets the feeling that Baron Munchausen would have been more fun if Gilliam hadn't placed so much stock in special effects. Every scene that emphasizes them seems to go on forever, as if Gilliam were trying to squeeze every last cent's worth out of his elaborate preparations. Despite some good moments, *Baron Munchausen* manages to make a flight of fantasy into a plodding adventure.

Dennis Hopper's *The Last Movie* positively embraces the concepts of "turgid" and "plodding." Long legendary as a sort

*continued on page 92*

## REVIEWED

### THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHHAUSEN

1989. John Neville, Eric Idle, Oliver Reed, Robin Williams; co-wr./dir. Terry Gilliam. 126m. (PG) ss cc \$89.95. RCA/Columbia. V image: good.

### THE NAVIGATOR

1989. Bruce Lyons, Chris Haywood, Hamish McFarlane, Marshall Napier; dir. Ward. 92m. (PG) V only. ss \$89.95. Trylon. Image: excel.

### THE LAST MOVIE

1971. Dennis Hopper, Peter Fonda, Julie Adams, Dean Stockwell; dir. Hopper. 108m. (R) \$79.95. United American. V image: good.

### EARTH GIRLS ARE EASY

1989. Geena Davis, Jeff Goldblum, Julie Brown, Damon Wayans; dir. Julien Temple. 99m. (PG) ss cc Also Sp. sub. \$89.98. Vestron. LV also. V image: good.

# Drama



**Ring Warrior:** Mickey Rourke puts on the gloves and bares his tattoo for *Homeboy*, a straight-to-video sleeper.

The major complaint leveled against *A World Apart* is that, like *Cry Freedom*, it is about the horrible effects of apartheid...on rich white people. The whites are well-meaning, but the film has no Mandelas or Bikos. The only blacks are seen serving, praying or being interrogated.

This said, the feature-film directorial debut by Chris Menges, who shot *The Killing Fields* and *The Mission*, is a well-

crafted film that showcases Barbara Hershey's best performance. She portrays Diana Roth, an Afrikaner journalist who is jailed on a minor charge in an effort to gather the names of people with whom she and her fugitive husband had associated. Her refusal to name names keeps her in jail and helps to further stigmatize her daughter (Jodhi May), who is already the subject of scorn at school because of her father's subversive activities.

May gives real dimension to the role of a young girl whose demands for a mother cannot simply be written off as immaturity or lack of concern, as her mother tries to do. David Suchet is the Draconian interrogator who uses Diane's guilt to try to get her to talk.

Another cinematographer-turned-director, Michael Seresin, is responsible for one of Mickey Rourke's newest. *Homeboy* is a straight-to-video boxing drama. But Mickey's character, small-time boxer Johnny Walker, wouldn't even stand a chance in a battle of wits with Rocky Balboa. Walker hardly speaks. He almost never opens his contorted mouth, except to curse or ask for booze.

When Christopher Walken, as a low-life thief named Wesley Pendergrass, shows up, he talks Walker into beating up Hassidic Jews to make them easier to rob. After Walker becomes pri-

mally attracted to a female carny, played by Rourke's real-life wife Debra Feuer, he abandons his association with Pendergrass and keeps fighting even though a doctor has determined that one more punch in the head could finish Walker for good. *Homeboy* truly captures the world of subhuman punks. If this is a sensation you crave, *Homeboy* is the film for you.

An ironic commentary on the state of new releases last spring was the fact that two of the hottest tickets in New York theaters were for Louis Malle's 18-year-old *Murder of the Heart* and the 27-year-old *Lawrence of Arabia*. In a wide-screen format with six-channel Dolby stereo, *Lawrence* was astounding and worth waiting for on long lines. The film was bigger than life and the grand scale made you glad to wait for that small dot on the horizon to become a man on a camel.

Collectors will love this new director's cut. All the colors are corrected, the sound re-recorded, the aspect ratio letterboxed and the flipped scenes flipped back. However, some of the things that grabbed our attention on a huge screen, with speakers everywhere, may have the opposite effect in a living room.

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## REVIEWED

### A WORLD APART

1988. Barbara Hershey, David Suchet, Jeroen Krabbe; dir. Chris Menges. 114m. (PG) ss cc \$89.95. Media. V image: good.

### LAWRENCE OF ARABIA

1962. Alec Guinness, Peter O'Toole, Anthony Quinn, Omar Shariff; dir. David Lean. 218m. (PG) V only. let. ss cc \$29.95. RCA/Columbia. Image: good.

### HOMEBOY

1989. Mickey Rourke, Christopher Walken, Debra Feuer; dir. Michael Seresin. 115m. (R) \$89.95. IVE. V image: good.

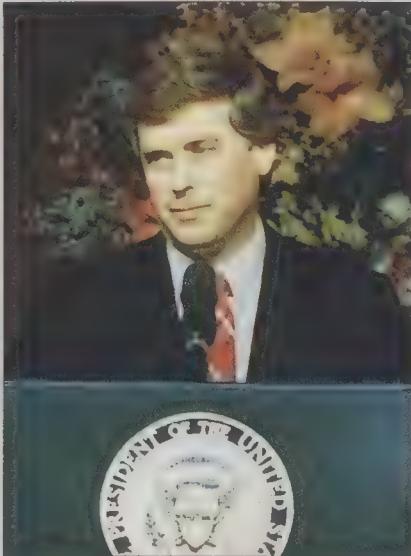
### MISS FIRECRACKER

1989. Holly Hunter, Mary Steenburgen, Tim Robbins, Scott Glenn; wr. Beth Henley; dir. Thomas Schlamme. 102m. (PG) V only. ss cc \$89.99. HBO. Image: good.



**Red, White & Wacky:** Holly Hunter waves a wicked flag in the screen version of *Miss Firecracker*.

## Non-Theatrical Releases



**Three Amigos:** (From left) Jonathan Frid casts *Dark Shadows*, Dan Quayle is *Just Kidding* and a shopping mall zombie delivers a *Document of the Dead*.

**M**artians from the *Cosmos*, Barnabas *Dark Shadows* and George Romero zombies. Do they still shock and fascinate us? The *Cosmos* series does, even though host Carl Sagan sounds like a baritone Kermit the Frog. In part five of the series, *Blues for a Red Planet*, Sagan says, "I can remember many an hour in my boyhood; arms, resolutely outstretched, imploring [Martians] to transport me" to Mars. "It never worked," he assures us, as if his obvious sincerity had left this point in doubt.

Sagan's an eccentric but enthusiastic teacher with a flair for drama. For example, he answers the "Is there intelligent life on Mars" question with pictures instead of words. Space-shot photos of Earth, with their revealing patterns of farmland and cities, contrast with shots of Mars' barren surface and random canals. We acknowledge the intellectual proof while sharing Sagan's original disappointment at its discovery.

Each *Cosmos* episode features at least a few unforgettable moments. We know the human body is just a mass of chemicals, but seeing Sagan display the water, the carbon, and the calcium bears an undeniable poignancy. Though padded with dull re-enactments of scientists brooding over notes, *Cosmos* succeeds as the grand video encyclopedia of outer space.

*Dark Shadows*, a gothic soap opera, enjoyed a cult following in the '60s but has rarely been seen since. And not without reason: Soap operas don't stand up to repeated viewing. At times, the charisma of the series' stars offsets the rampant clichés, but there's no immortality in lines like "Welcome to the beginning and end of the world" or "My roots are here — perhaps my destiny."

*Night of the Living Dead* still packs a punch, but is George Romero's popular feature film a cheap comic-book thriller or a prime example of the director's art? *Document of the Dead* offers interviews and film clips in an attempt to prove the latter. The surprise is that it's almost persuasive.

Choice scenes from the film recall

the era of silent horror classics; others evoke Alfred Hitchcock's penchant for the unexpected. But taking Romero too seriously is like stretching a zombie — eventually the thing falls apart. The documentary praises the director for clichéd techniques (such as tilting the camera to show a character's disorientation) while serving up pseudo-insights like "Making films in Pittsburgh for ten years has become a sort of stylistic statement."

Splatter fans might enjoy the behind-the-scenes look at *Dawn of the Dead*'s special effects. Ultimately, however, *Document of the Dead* preaches to the converted. *Dead* heads will use it to transform their guilty pleasures into art

*continued on page 90*

### REVIEWED

**COSMOS: BLUES FOR A RED PLANET**  
1980. Carl Sagan. 60m. Hi st \$19.98.  
Turner. V image: excel.

**DARK SHADOWS: THE RESURRECTION OF BARNABAS COLLINS**  
1966. Jonathan Frid, Joan Bennett.  
120m. Hi \$29.95. MPI. V image: good.

**DOCUMENT OF THE DEAD**  
1989. George Romero, Tom Savini,  
Christine Forrest; dir. Roy Frumkes.  
86m. Hi \$79.95. Studio Entertainment.  
V image: good.

**DAN QUAYLE: JUST KIDDING**  
1989. Hosted by Phyllis Hamlin. 30m.  
\$9.95. NAC. V image: good.

**HONEYBLOOPERS**  
1989. B&W. Jackie Gleason, Audrey  
Meadows. 60m. Hi \$19.95. MPI. V im-  
age: good.

**VOYAGE ROUND MY FATHER**  
1983. Sir Laurence Olivier; dir. Alvin  
Rakoff. 85m. Hi \$89.99. HBO. V image:  
good.



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# Kidvid

## Getting ready for the tumultuous '90s

BY MARIANNE MEYER

January 1990. It's hard to believe that kidvid was barely a gleam in producers' eyes only a decade ago. In the years since, children's programming has gone from hard-to-find to hard-to-ignore. There's plenty more in store for the '90s (more about which later), but what we think is about to happen has its roots in the way kidvid grew up.

In fact, kidvid was something of a slow starter. Even as late as 1986, the genre was still an oddity. A *My Little Pony* movie, a concert show from a new singer named Raffi — these were just a small trickle in the tremendous flood of movies aimed at adults.

Then a funny thing happened. Parents realized that tapes afforded the chance not only to control what their children saw, but when they saw it. As kids clamored for tapes based on favorite TV shows and toy lines (often one and the same, alas), parents began demanding tapes with educational elements. A new era, and some new battles, had begun.

At first, video manufacturers churned out repackaged TV series like *Transformers* and *He-Man*. Except for the occasional moral lesson tagged onto the end of a show, these cassettes amounted to little more than playable commercials. Better video packaging, like that of material from *Sesame Street* and *Faerie Tale Theatre*, only increased parents' demand for kidvid with purpose and/or style. When Disney finally opened its vaults to sell tapes and discs of its animated classics, sales went through the roof. Video companies saw the sales potential in tapes that kids wanted and parents trusted, and a move toward original programming began.

As if to disarm parents who saw in video a threat to developing reading skills, manufacturers issued adaptations of popular books in lieu of original productions. The stories appeased parents and educators while offering the sales hook of familiarity without the unsavory connections of licensed toys. Children's Circle, longtime creators of fine short subjects for the educational market, began releasing stories on cassette. The Sony/Rabbit Ears collection, matching celebrity narrators like Robin Williams and Meryl Streep with musicians like Ry Cooder and the Chieftains, ushered in a new level of quality in the mid-'80s. The

ceeded in demonstrating the potential of video as an information medium.

Today, parents know what they want and have an easier time getting it. Initially stocked only in big chains and specialty toy or kid stores, kidvid is now a retail staple and a big sell-through category. Some good tapes from small companies still suffer from spotty distribution, but a new movement toward catalogue sales has made previously obscure titles easier to track down. Libraries, too, stock videos in increasing numbers, making it easier for parents to audition tapes before buying.

But that's only the half of it. Kidvid has a great and controversial future to look forward to. Here's what to expect as the decade asserts itself:

- *A move toward real video, not fake TV.* Some original productions, like the *Jim Henson Play-Along Videos* and Shari Lewis' music and game tapes, make specific use of the video medium by encouraging interactive play that parallels VCR functions. Smart competitors will continue to offer something on video that's unique to the medium.

- *Prices, and perhaps quality, will decline.* The

favored price point for kidvid is now \$14.95, sometimes even \$9.95. Prices can't go much lower, but some manufacturers are cutting costs by recording at the slow speed (leading to a decline in image and sound quality) or by using cheaper materials. Consumers can help stop this trend by voicing complaints and returning damaged product — directly to the manufacturer, if necessary.

- *Kidvid specialty outlets will blossom.* Forward-thinking retailers will target concerned parents with efficient, helpful and well-stocked kidvid stores, or dedicated sections within their stores, proba-

*continued on page 94*



Stories to Remember group, introduced by Hi-Tops last year, is a strong challenger. Classic book pals like Madeline, Babar, Dr. Seuss and Richard Scarry all made video debuts.

Music video for kids, offering the familiarity of favorite tunes and high repeatability, matured as a genre. Many of the best series — *Kidsongs*, *Barney and the Backyard Gang*, *Wee Sing* — came from small, independent companies. Original kidvids aimed at instruction (art, magic, exercise) and issues (personal safety, drug-abuse prevention, sex education) also took off. Often controversial, sometimes preachy, these tapes at least suc-

# Directory

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

### Babes on Broadway

1941. B&W. Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney, Fay Bainter, Donna Reed; dir. Busby Berkeley. Sequel to *Babes in Arms* follows gang to Manhattan. You'll want to fast-forward between musical segments. 121m. \$29.95. MGM/UA.

### The Bravados

1958. Gregory Peck, Joan Collins, Stephen Boyd; dir. Henry King. Sober, well-made western features Peck as rancher in pursuit of men who raped and killed his wife. 99m. St cc \$39.98. CBS/Fox.

### Broken Lance

1954. Spencer Tracy, Richard Widmark, Robert Wagner, Jean Peters, E.G. Marshall; dir. Edward Dmytryk. Brothers' rivalry escalates as cattle-ranching family's fortunes fade. Tracy fine as stern patriarch. 96m. St cc \$39.98. CBS/Fox.

### Gold Diggers of 1935

1935. B&W. Dick Powell, Adolphe Menjou, Gloria Stuart, Alice Brady, Hugh Herbert; dir. Busby Berkeley. Wealthy woman bank-rolls stage revue. Finale includes production numbers "The Words Are in My Heart," "Lullaby of Broadway." 96m. \$29.95. MGM/UA.

### Great Balls of Fire

1989. Dennis Quaid, Winona Ryder, Alec Baldwin; dir. Jim McBride. Bizarre musical bio of rocker Jerry Lee Lewis (he did new vocals for Quaid's frantic lip-syncing) never finds steady tone, lurching between drama,



**Guns in the Sun:** Denzel Washington (left) and Robert Townsend in tropical whodunit *The Mighty Quinn*.

spoof and live-action cartoon. An interesting mess. 108m. (PG-13) ss cc \$89.98. Orion.

### Kathy Smith's Ultimate Stomach and Thighs Workout

1989. Fitness guru's latest includes aerobic routines for toning abdomen, thigh and buttocks. 90m. St V only. \$19.95. CBS/Fox.

### King Lear

1983. Laurence Olivier, Diana Rigg, John

## Labels For Less



Gregory Peck in  
*The Bravados*

In a press release trumpeting the debut of four "Western Legends" titles — *Buffalo Bill*, *Broken Lance*, *Western Union* and *The Bravados* (see "Highlights" above) — CBS/Fox claims that at \$39.98 each, these movies are cheap enough to attract film buffs but pricey enough to generate hefty profits for rental stores. Will cinephiles addicted to the pleasures of ownership take the bait or seek a cheaper fix? Stay tuned — if this promotion is successful, CBS/Fox will release four more \$40 titles every three months.

• **RCA/Columbia** launches its "Columbia Classics" lineup with four Frank Capra classics at \$19.95: reissues of *Lost Horizon* (the restored version) and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, plus new releases of *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and *You Can't Take It with You*.

• **Sony** has repriced public TV's much-lauded 13-hour series *Vietnam: A Television History* from \$29.95 to \$14.95 per cassette; the complete seven-volume package goes for \$99.95. Also reduced are four other 'Nam documentary titles: *A Program for Vietnam Veterans* and *Everyone Else Who Should Care*, *Vietnam Requiem*, *Missing in Action* and *Soldiers in Hiding*. —SD

Hurt, Leo McKern, Colin Blakely; dir. Michael Elliot. Outstanding British TV production. Larry superb. 158m. St \$29.95. Kultur.

### La Lectrice

1988. Miou-Miou, Christian Rache, Sylvie Laporte, Michel Raskine; co-wr/dir. Michel Deville. Hired reader fends off clients' romantic advances. Engaging French comedy. 98m. (R) sub. \$79.98. Orion.

### The Mighty Quinn

1989. Denzel Washington, Robert Townsend, James Fox, Mimi Rogers, Esther Rolle; dir. Carl Schenkel. Jamaican police chief suspects childhood chum accused of murder is innocent. Captivating tropical caper with reggae-peppered soundtrack. 98m. (R) ss cc \$89.98. CBS/Fox.

### A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child

1989. Robert Englund, Lisa Wilcox, Danny Hassel; dir. Stephen Hopkins. Razor-fisted Freddie finds way to enter victims' waking hours. Rated and unrated versions; latter contains alternate death scenes cut from theatrical release. 90m. (R) 91m. ss cc \$89.95. Media.

### Opera Favorites Sung by Plácido Domingo and Kiri Te Kanawa

1989 comp. Excerpts from performances of *Die Fledermaus*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Erlösi*, *Otello*, more. 59m. ss sub. V only. \$39.99. HBO.

### Pee-wee's Playhouse Christmas Special

1988. Paul Rubens, Frankie Avalon, Annette Funicello, Charo, Whoopi Goldberg, Grace Jones, Joan Rivers, Little Richard, Dinah Shore, Oprah Winfrey, Zsa Zsa Gabor. Holiday installment of children's show. Priceless bit: Santa chastens a selfish Pee-wee. Approx. 55m. cc \$79.95. Hi-Tops.

### Pee-wee's Playhouse, Vols. 12-13

1988. More episodes: *Pee-wee Catches Cold* (and plays "giant underpants"), *Tons o' Fun* (Miss Yvonne clog dances, Cowboy Curtis sings). 25m. ea. V only. \$14.95 ea. Hi-Tops.

### Search for Battleship Bismarck

1989. Pr. Chris Weber, Peter Schnall. National Geographic program detailing exploration of sunken Nazi vessel found off coast of France. 60m. \$29.98. Vestron.

### Star Trek V: The Final Frontier

1989. William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelly; dir. Shatner. Religious zealot takes over Enterprise and attempts to find God at universe's center. Amusing character vignettes connect labored action scenes. 106m. ss cc B \$29.95 V price n.a. Paramount.

See next page for key to abbreviations.

## DIRECTORY

### **Western Union**

1941. Randolph Scott, Robert Young, Dean Jagger, Virginia Gilmore, Chill Wills; dir. Fritz Lang. Telegraph pioneers complete transcontinental line. Colorful production. 95m. cc \$39.98. CBS/Fox.

### **Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown**

1988. Carmen Maura, Maria Barranco, Antonio Banderas; wr./dir. Pedro Almodovar. Amusing characters abound in this affectionate, farcical look at unrequited love. 88m. (R) sub. \$79.98. Orion.

### **Ziegfeld Girl**

1941. B&W. James Stewart, Judy Garland, Hedy Lamarr, Lana Turner, Tony Martin, Edward Everett Horton, Eve Arden, Dan Dailey; dir. Robert Z. Leonard. Musical melodrama follows lives of three women chosen for Follies by impresario Florenz Ziegfeld. Drippingly lavish dance numbers staged by (who else?) Busby Berkeley. Also includes 1943 short *We Must Have Music*. 133m. \$29.95. MGM/UA.

### **COMEDY**

#### **Black Adder III**

1989 comp. Rowan Atkinson, Hugh Laurie; wr. Richard Curtis, Ben Elton. Episodes of British series: *Dish and Dishonesty*, *Ink and Incapability*, *Nob and Nobility*. 89m. cc \$39.98. CBS/Fox.

### **Boy, Did I Get a Wrong Number!**

1966. Bob Hope, Elke Sommer, Phyllis Diller; dir. George Marshall. Misconnection involves married man with film actress. 99m. V only. \$14.95. Wood Knapp.

### **Chances Are**

1989. Cybill Shepherd, Robert Downey Jr., Ryan O'Neal, Mary Stuart Masterson; dir. Emile Ardolino. Husband killed in accident is reborn as infant, seeks out wife 23 years later. 108m. (PG) ss cc \$89.95. RCA/Columbia.

## PROGRAM LEGEND

### **DATE**

Varies according to type of program.

**Films:** original theatrical release.

**Made-for-broadcast:** first telecast.

**Made-for-video:** first release in any format.

**Compilations:** production of collected work.

### **FORMAT**

All tape programs are available in Beta and VHS unless noted.

**B:** Beta cassette

**V:** VHS cassette

**8:** 8mm cassette

**LV:** videodisc in CLV or CAV format.

### **AUDIO**

All available info is provided. Tapes generally have Hi-Fi tracks; discs are CX encoded.

**St:** stereo

**SS:** Dolby surround stereo

**CC:** closed-captioned

### **IMAGE RATING**

For theatrical releases, ratings of **excel.**, **good**, **fair** and **poor** refer to transfer quality and visual appearance; for non-theatrical programs, to overall visual quality.

### **ETCETERA**

Official MPAA ratings (G, PG, PG-13, R, X) are noted when available. All programs are in color unless noted.

**anim:** animated

**B&W:** black & white

**cas:** videocassette

**comp.:** compilation

**czd.:** colorized

**dig.:** digital

**dir.:** directed by

**dub.:** dubbed

**let.:** letterboxed

**m.:** minutes

**n.a.:** not available

**nar.:** narrated by

**NR:** not rated

**pr.:** produced by

**RE:** reissue

**sim.:** simulated

**Sp.:** Spanish

**sub.:** subtitled

**TVM:** made for television

**wr.:** written by

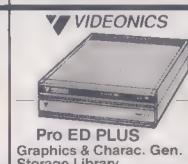
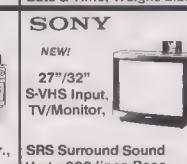
**2ap.:** second audio channel

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## DIRECTORY

### **How I Got Into College**

1989. Corey Parker, Christopher Rydell, Lara Flynn Boyle; dir. Savage Steve Holland. Videotaped application does the trick. 87m. (PG-13) cc ss \$89.98. CBS/Fox.

### **K-9**

1989. James Belushi, Mel Harris, Kevin Tighe; dir. Rod Daniel. Headstrong cop's new partner is a pooch. 111m. (PG-13) ss cc \$89.95. MCA.

### **Loverboy**

1989. Patrick Dempsey, Kate Jackson, Carrie Fisher, Kirstie Alley; dir. Joan Micklin Silver. Teen delivering pizzas finds Beverly Hills wives want more than food. 98m. (PG-13) ss cc \$89.95. RCA/Columbia.

### **Open All Hours**

1983. Ronnie Barker, Lynda Baron, David Jason; wr. Roy Clarke. British sitcom involves avaricious shopkeeper. 85m. cc \$39.98. CBS/Fox.

### **Weekend at Bernie's**

1989. Andrew McCarthy, Jonathan Silverman, Catherine Mary Stewart; dir. Ted Kotcheff. Two young employees invited to boss's beach house find him dead. 101m. (PG-13) ss \$89.95. IVE.

### **DRAMA**

#### **Breaking Point**

1989. Corbin Bernsen, Joanna Pacula, John Glover; dir. Peter Markle. Determined to ascertain D-day invasion sites, Nazis abduct

American spy and condition him to believe war is over. 90m. St \$79.98. Turner.

### **Buying Time**

1989. Dean Stockwell, Jeff Schultz, Leslie Tott; dir. Mitchell Gabourie. Teen gamblers help track friend's killer. 97m. (R) \$79.98. CBS/Fox.

### **Field of Honor**

1987. Chris Campion, Frederic Mayer; dir. Jean-Pierre Denis. During Franco-Prussian war, peasant farmer accepts fee to join army in place of wealthy merchant's son. 87m. (PG) sub. \$79.98. Orion.

### **John and Yoko: A Love Story**

1985. Mark McGann, Kim Miyori, Kenneth Price; dir. Sandor Stern. TVM. Fair bio with plenty of Beatles tunes. 146m. \$79.95. SVS. ▶

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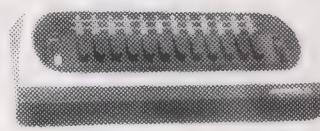
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**ACTION**

**Jakarta**

1988. Christopher North. CIA agent in

love with Indonesian woman he's assigned

to protect. 94m. (R) \$79.95. MCEG/Virgin.

**Ride in the Whirlwind**

1965. Cameron Mitchell, Jack Nicholson,

Harry Dean Stanton; wr/co-pr. Nicholson;

dir. Monte Hellman. Trio of horsemen

taken for outlaws. 83m. \$29.98. Vid-

America.

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## DIRECTORY

Hellman. Western revenge tale with twist ending. 82m. \$29.98. VidAmerica.

## VIDEODISCS

### Alien

1979. Sigourney Weaver; dir. Ridley Scott. Horror. Supplementary material includes cut scenes. 124m. (R) ss let. dig. 3 sides. \$69.98. CBS/Fox.

### Aliens

1986 (1990). Sigourney Weaver; dir. James Cameron. Sci-fi/horror. Expanded version with 18m. new footage. 155m. (R) ss cc let. dig. 3 sides. \$69.98. CBS/Fox.

### The Rainbow

1989.

Sammi Davis, Paul McGann, Amanda Donohoe, Glenda Jackson; pr.dir. Ken Russell. Adaptation of D.H. Lawrence novel: rebellious young Englishwoman finds sex the antidote to Victorian strictures. 104m. (R) \$89.98. Also Sp. sub. version. Vestron.

### Saigon: Year of the Cat

1984.

Frederic Forrest, E.G. Marshall, Judi Dench; wr. David Hare; dir. Stephen

Frears. Love story set against '75 American

evacuation. 106m. V only. \$89.99. HBO.

### The Best of the Little Rascals

1934-37; comp. 1989. B&W. Comedy.

Includes *Divot Diggers*, *Second Childhood*, *First*

*Roundup*. Dig. \$29.98. Republic.

### The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell

1955.

Gary Cooper; dir. Otto Preminger.

Drama. Includes trailer. 100m. let. dig.

\$29.98. Republic.

### E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial

1982. Henry Thomas; dir. Steven Spielberg. CAV edition with trailer, production photos. 115m. (PG) ss cc let. dig. 5 sides. \$59.98. VidAmerica.

### El Dorado

1967.

John Wayne, Robert Mitchum; dir.

Howard Hawks. Western. 126m. (NR) 3

sides. \$39.95. Paramount.

### Intermezzo

1936. B&W. Ingrid Bergman, Gosta Ekman. Swedish romantic drama, remake in 1939 for Bergman's Hollywood debut. 88m. sub. dig. \$34.95. Lumivision.

### It's a Wonderful Life

1946.

James Stewart, Donna Reed; dir.

Frank Capra. Drama. Includes trailer.

126m. 3 sides. \$34.98. Republic.

### L'Avventura

1960. B&W. Monica Vitti; dir. Michelangelo Antonioni. Drama. Includes photo supplement. 145m. (NR) sub. let. dig. CAV

5 sides. \$124.95. Criterion.

### The Man Who Would Be King

1975.

Sean Connery, Michael Caine; dir.

John Huston. Adventure. 129m. (PG) cc

let. 3 sides. CBS/Fox.

### Rio Lobo

1970.

John Wayne, Jennifer O'Neill; dir.

Howard Hawks. Western. 114m. (G) cc

\$39.98. CBS/Fox.

### Sabrina

1954. B&W. Humphrey Bogart, Audrey Hepburn, William Holden. Comedy. 113m. \$34.95. Paramount.

### Tampopo

1986. Nobuko Miyamoto; dir. Juzo Itami.

Comedy. 114m. (NR) sub. let. dig. \$29.98.

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### When Harry Met Sally...

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96m. (R) ss cc \$24.95. Nelson.

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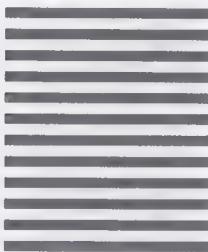
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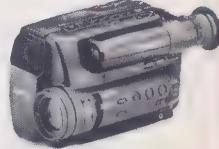


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The **Criterion** Collection, Voyager Co., 1351 Pacific Coast Hwy., Santa Monica, CA 90401; 213-451-1383, orders 800-446-2001, in CA 800-443-2001.

**Fox Hills:** see **Media**.

**HBO** Video, 1100 Sixth Ave., New York, NY 10036; 212-512-1000.

**Hi-Tops:** see **Media**.

**Image** Entertainment (Videodiscs), 6311 Roamaine St., Hollywood, CA 90038; 213-468-8867.

**IVE**, 15400 Sherman Way, P.O. Box 10124, Van Nuys, CA 91410-0124; 818-908-0303.

**Kultur** Videograms, 121 Hwy. 36, W. Long Branch, NJ 07764; 201-229-2343, orders 800-4-KULTUR.

**LumiVision**, 1490 Lafayette St., Denver, CO 80218; 303-860-0400.

**MCA** Home Video, 70 Universal City Plaza, Universal City, CA 91608; 818-777-4315.

**MCEG/Virgin** Home Entertainment, 6100 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles CA 90048; 213-965-3500.

**Media** Home Entertainment, 5730 Buck-

ingham Pkwy., Culver City, CA 90230; 213-216-7900.

**MGM/UA** Home Video, 10000 Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232; 213-280-6000, orders 800-443-5500 ext. 798.

**Nelson** Entertainment, 335 N. Maple Dr., Beverly Hills, CA 90210; 213-285-6000.

**New Star** Video, 260 S. Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, CA 90212-3813; 213-205-0666.

**Orion** Home Video, 410 Park Ave., New York, NY 10022; 212-888-4500.

**Paramount** Home Video, 5555 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90038-3197; 213-468-5000.

**Pioneer** LDCA, 2265 East 220 St., Long Beach, CA 90810; 213-835-6177.

**RCA/Columbia** Pictures Home Video, 3500 West Olive Ave., Burbank, CA 91505; 818-953-7900.

**Republic** Pictures Home Video, 12636 Beatrice St., Los Angeles, CA 90066-0930; 213-306-4040.

**SVS** Films, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019; 212-757-4990.

**Turner** Home Entertainment, 1 CNN Center, Atlanta, GA 30348; 404-827-1013.

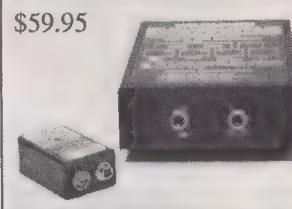
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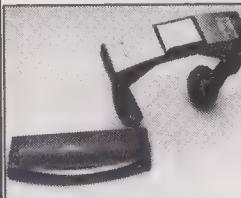
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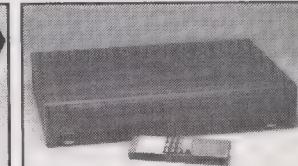
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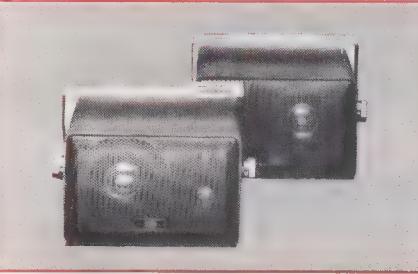


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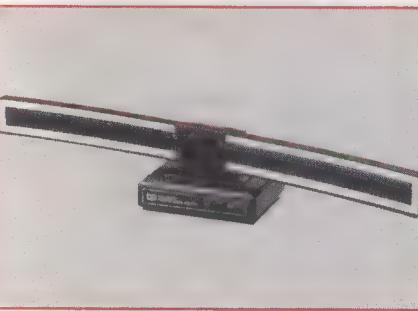
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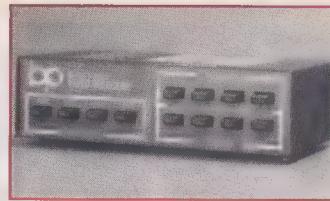


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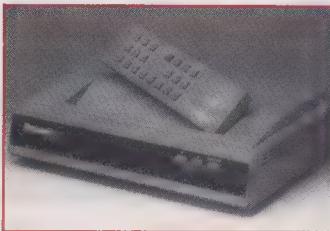
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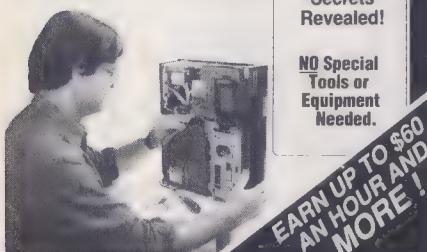
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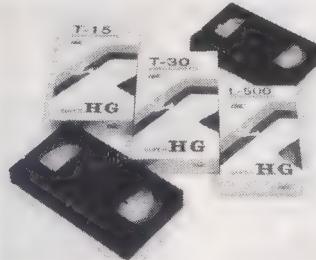
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## DRAMA

continued from page 76

room. The loud overture against black might seem silly and that dot may never get big enough to decipher. On video, this director's cut may not be as much of an improvement as it was in theaters, but *Lawrence* is still a great film with wonderful performances. On any screen Peter O'Toole is the perfect actor to play the grandiose, self-proclaimed prophet.

In *Miss Firecracker*, Holly Hunter's take on life is a bit more modest: "They say we all gonna be dying some day...and I believe them!" This neo-gothic tale of Southern life by Beth Henley contains all the certifiable characters people either love or hate in her work. Hunter plays Carnelle, a girl who wants to up-

*Even on a small tube, 'Lawrence' is a great film.*

grade her status in Yazoo City from Miss Hot Tamale to Miss Firecracker, the "ambassador of beauty."

Tim Robbins plays a crazed cousin who walks out on his job scraping dead animals off the road to pursue his philosophical potential, and he is hilarious. Mary Steenburgen plays a cousin who once won the coveted Miss Firecracker title, but has little faith in Carnelle's chances. And Alfre Woodard is a seamstress who sews outfits for bullfrogs and hears voices through her eyes. Compared to this group, Blanche and Stanley look like models of stability.

## NON-THEATRICAL

continued from page 77

appreciation.

Sometimes "fine art" isn't any fun at all. Costume dramas like those on *Masterpiece Theatre* can make for dull, listless viewing. The Thames TV film *Voyage Round My Father* too often fits this mold, then suddenly springs to life with a witty line or a moment of inspired acting. Written by John Mortimer (who also scripted the stylish *Rumpole of the Bailey* series), *Voyage* presents a son (Alan Bates) narrating anecdotes of love and fear about his eccentric father (Laurence Olivier), a famous lawyer who

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<b>SONY CCDF36</b> ... 4 lux • f/4 • 2.1 lbs 250K pixels • 6X Zoom	<b>JVC KSRX1010</b> ... SPECIAL Digital • Dolby • A/R • AUX In 4 Channel Amp • Line Out	<b>CLARION 9700RT</b> ... \$225 Removable DIN • Dolby 4 Channel Power • Line Out	<b>CLARION 8671RT</b> ... \$199 Removable DIN • APC • A/R Bass + Treble • RCA Line	<b>SONY VR490</b> ... GUARANTEED LOW PRICE 4-Head • 8/365 Day On Screen Display	<b>SONY VR490</b> ... GUARANTEED LOW PRICE 4-Head • FEH • f/6 2 lb 10 oz • Variable Shutter	<b>JVC PCX300</b> ... GUARANTEED LOW PRICE 50 Watts/Ch • Remote • 7 Band EQ 40 Presets • Compu Link
<b>SONY CCDF46</b> ... 3 lux • 8X Zoom • FEH • f/6 2 lb 10 oz • Variable Shutter	<b>JVC VR490</b> ... GUARANTEED LOW PRICE 4-Head • FEH • f/6 2 lb 10 oz • Variable Shutter	<b>CLARION 8671RT</b> ... \$199 Removable DIN • APC • A/R Bass + Treble • RCA Line	<b>CLARION 8671RT</b> ... \$199 Removable DIN • APC • A/R Bass + Treble • RCA Line	<b>SONY VR490</b> ... GUARANTEED LOW PRICE 4-Head • FEH • f/6 2 lb 10 oz • Variable Shutter	<b>SONY VR490</b> ... GUARANTEED LOW PRICE 4-Head • FEH • f/6 2 lb 10 oz • Variable Shutter	<b>JVC PCX300</b> ... GUARANTEED LOW PRICE 50 Watts/Ch • Remote • 7 Band EQ 40 Presets • Compu Link

# KIDVID

continued from page 79

bly with slightly higher prices to match the services. Many faceless chains and some sloppily run mom-and-pop stores will just toss up big displays for heavily promoted tie-ins and call it a kids section.

• More big theatrical releases will aim at the whole family. Disney animation made a comeback with *Oliver and Company* and made big money with milestone Roger Rabbit. When E.T. phoned home, it seemed the whole world took his call collect. But not all films sold as family entertainment deserve the tag. The second *Indiana Jones* movie, for instance, was inappropriate for very young audiences with its kids-in-slavery and heart-ripping scenes. Though rated PG-13, it was merchandised to age groups as young as preschool.

• Shameless exploitation will continue. First came the Rambo cartoon series (*Rambo and the Children for Peace?* — give me a break), then a series of *RoboCop* toys and now the nadir of the trend,

Freddy Krueger talking dolls. The merchandising of R-rated films to kids continues to alarm child-development experts. Preliminary studies show a correlation between a kid's exposure to graphically violent films and a desensitization to violence in real life. When will toy and video manufacturers—and parents themselves—draw the line?

• Battles will be fought. Many efforts to regulate the sale and rental of R- and X-rated materials to kids have been thwarted by strong retail lobbying efforts. President Reagan vetoed a landmark bill in 1988 that would have limited the number and length of commercials on children's television. The Child Protection and Obscenity Enforcement Act was an attempt to block sexual material from young audiences, but it was difficult to endorse or enforce. Legal issues related to children and video will be a constant. Still, parents must take the initiative in monitoring what their children watch.

• Commercial TV will probably get better. The rise of the Nickelodeon cable network and the general improvement of Saturday-morning fare (like *Pee-wee's Playhouse* and *The New Adventures of*

*Winnie the Pooh*) show that television programmers are willing to create higher-quality shows to wrestle viewers back from home video.

• Creeping commercialization will leap. First, sponsorships blurred the line between content and commercials. For instance, Minute Maid sponsored tapes aimed at drug-abuse prevention and personal safety in which the sales pitch was limited to a few sips of juice. Then *The Feel Better Friends with Rosenthal & Pandy* gave equal billing to a respected children's music duo and the mascot of children's Panadol medicine. Last year, Hi-Tops announced it would coproduce an animated video, *McTreasure Island*, starring a certain burger-chain clown.

In the past two years unabashed ads have broken into children's titles. Kid-aimed releases like *The Land Before Time* included varying degrees of pitch, leading to a full-fledged toy commercial interrupting an animated Golden Book cartoon, *The Great Harbor Rescue*.

A call to arms is necessary, lest the 1990s produce home video just as addictive as the medium it was meant to replace. More than ever, concerned parents had better look for the hook. ■

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City _____	
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\*NOTE: This is just a partial listing of extensive inventory, please call for quotes on additional items or fill out and return the attached price list request.

## VIDEOTESTS

# SHARP

continued from page 41

two analog audio outputs and a power cord.

The buttons on the D100's slim remote control are separated into groups by a series of lines and tinted backgrounds. Toward the front are buttons for power, open/close, TV/disc, display, a 10-digit keypad, +10, program and call, plus controls for audio and for selecting a disc. Behind are buttons for various audio cassette edit options; the major play, scan, track skip and disc motion options; still manipulation and multi-speed options; random play, intro search and repeats; and output level (volume control) up and down for the main analog/digital audio output.

**Operation.** The basic operations for playing laserdiscs, CDs and CD-Vs are so easy they have an intuitive quality. More complex functions like frame/time/chapter/track search and multi-speed playback can be accessed with appropriate buttons. Programming tracks from a single disc is also straightforward. The manual, however, is fuzzy on how to sequence tracks from more than one

disc, although it's clearer on using the audio cassette edit functions. Operational ease is very good to excellent. The multi-disc capabilities are very convenient, but you may miss a few functions common to other combi players, such as CLV special effects.

**Performance.** The MV-D100's picture is rated for a horizontal resolution of 425 lines, but we measured 410 lines with the M1 Reference Disc we use as our standard. Keep in mind that all measurements of play-only systems are subject to the limits of the selected software. All the deck's signal-to-noise ratios are very high. The unweighted video S/N is 46.2 (44.8) decibels, and the weighted video S/N is 50.6 (47.9) dB at the video output. The unweighted luminance S/N is 43.4 (40.3) dB, and the weighted luminance S/N is 47.7 (42.1) dB at the Y/C connector. Chroma AM S/N is 40.5 (43.3) dB, and chroma PM S/N is 34.5 (44.6) dB. (See "Editor's Note" on page 42 for an explanation of the results in parentheses.) The video S/N measurements are excellent compared with other players we've measured, but the other S/N measurements are only good to very good. We rate picture quality as very good to excellent.

The audio frequency response of the

### Sharp MV-D100 Combi Player

#### DATA

**Suggested Price:**  
\$1,500

**Weight:**  
30 pounds

**Dimensions:**  
6 x 17 x 18 inches  
(h/w/d)

**Power Requirements:**  
120 VAC, 60 Hz

**Power Consumption:**  
50 W

**Disc Formats:**  
LD, CDV, CDV—12-,  
8-, 5- and 3-inch discs

**Play Speed Select:**  
automatic

**Frame Advance:**  
forward and reverse

**Multispeed Play:**  
forward and reverse—  
3x, 2x, 1x, 1/2x, 1/4x,  
1/8x, 1/16x and approx.  
one frame every second  
(1/32x) and every two seconds  
(1/64x)

**Rapid Search:**  
5 seconds end to end

**Cue & Review Search (Scan):**  
90 seconds end to end

**Remote:**  
IR wireless with buttons for power, open/close, TV/Disc, audio monitor, auto digital/analog, CX, display, chapter/frame/time, disc 1, disc 2, disc 3, 10-digit keypad, +10, program, call, auto edit, edit, auto fade, level search, calibrate, tape side A/B, C-46, C-60, C-90, skip/tape length forward and reverse, play, scan

forward and reverse, stop/clear, memory stop, pause/still, multispeed + and +, multispeed forward and reverse, still/step forward and reverse, random, intro, repeat one, repeat all, output level up and down.

**Separate Eject:**  
stop/eject

**Counter Digits:**  
chapter or track—2;  
program—2; frame—5,  
or time—4 (mins:secs)

**Counter Memory:**  
one—resume at point where pause/still was pressed (memory stop)

**Program Start Locator/Index/Cue:**  
chapter/track, frame/time, intro search, memory stop

**Analog FM Audio:**  
stereo or two mono tracks

**Digital Audio:**  
stereo or two mono tracks

**Accessories:**  
remote control with batteries, video cable, S-video cable, stereo audio cable

#### RESULTS

**Horizontal Resolution:**  
rated—425 lines; measured—410 lines

**Video S/N, Unweighted:**  
46.2 dB

**Video S/N, Weighted:**  
50.6 dB

**Luminance S/N, Unweighted:**  
43.4 dB

**Luminance S/N, Weighted:**  
47.7 dB

**S/N, Chroma AM:**  
40.5 dB

**S/N, Chroma PM:**  
34.5 dB

**Audio Frequency Response:**  
digital—10 Hz-20 kHz,  
+0.1/-3.5 dB; analog—  
20 Hz-20 kHz, +0/-6.8 dB

**S/N, Audio:**  
digital—over 98 dB; analog—75.2 dB

**Audio Distortion:**  
digital—0.01% (our software's limit); analog—0.03%

#### RATINGS

**Picture Quality:**  
very good/excellent

**Audio Quality:**  
very good

**Operational Ease:**  
very good/excellent

**Overall Performance:**  
very good/excellent



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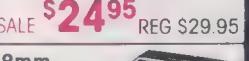
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**LENS SET**

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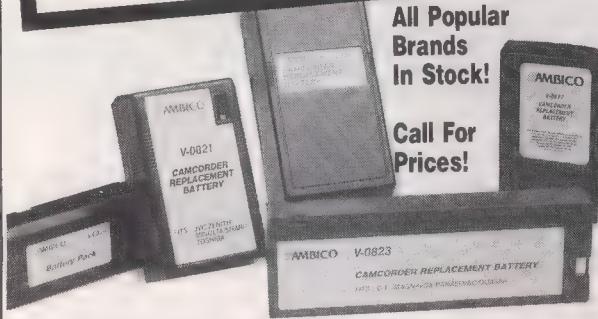
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7½v battery and 30W quartz-halogen light; provides 20-25 minutes of brilliant lighting. AC adapter (incl.). NiCd battery recharges up to 1000 times. Recharger included.



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150W AC / 100W DC

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Economical, powers camcorder up to 4 hrs or light for ½ hr or more.

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### HO-0365 FLIP- FLOP 2-in-1 lens

Flip the 1.5 x telephoto and it instantly becomes 0.6 wide angle without taking it off the camcorder. 50% more zoom; 60% wider field of view. 3 multi-coated glass elements.



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### HO-0623 WIRELESS 'PASS AROUND' MIKE

More RF high-frequency output, for outstanding acoustical accuracy in group recordings. Transmits up to 300 ft., eliminates hum from camcorder's motors.



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cellent. We rate picture quality as very good to excellent.

The frequency response of the hi-fi tracks is 20 Hertz to 20 kilohertz, +0.3 to -1.7 dB, at all speeds. On the linear track the -3 dB frequency response is 100 Hz to 12 kHz at SP, 100 Hz to 6.3 kHz at LP and 80 Hz to 5 kHz at SLP. Dynamic range on the hi-fi tracks is 83.4 dB and the audio S/N of the linear tracks is 43.6 dB. The total harmonic distortion is 0.4 percent for the hi-fi tracks and 1.2 percent for the linear track. Audio performance is excellent compared to other hi-fi VCRs.

**Conclusion.** The Panasonic PV-S4990 can make only one programmed in/out edit at a time, while other high-end decks with editing controllers can memorize and execute up to eight edits. However, these decks cost up to twice as much. None of these decks (including the Panasonic) operate at their best unless coupled with another VCR of exactly the same brand and model. We hope the VHS camp will soon establish a single standard for synchro edit VCRs.

The S4990's picture quality is very good to excellent, while ease of operation and audio quality are excellent. We

give it an overall performance rating of very good to excellent. Its competitors may have scored higher in individual performance areas, but the S4990 is no slouch. At a suggested price of \$1,599, it is an excellent value. We recommend it highly. ■

## SONY

*continued from page 42*

white and gray available on the selector are not as intense as the white and black selected with the buttons.

The rear panel has the power cord, an accessory AC outlet, a large, finned heat sink and three groups of connectors for stereo audio line in, and source in and output jacks. The source inputs are arranged in rows with stereo audio, video and S-video jacks in each. A high-quality Y/C separator inside prepares video inputs for separate luminance and chrominance processing. S-video is already separated. There are two sets of outputs with stereo audio, video and S-video. All the outputs are always active.

**Operation.** There are two ways to approach the XV-C900. You can just use the controls until you see what you like, then repeat the steps for a recording, or you can try to understand exactly what part of a video signal each control modifies and how, so you can plan everything. Just winging it is easy but chancey. However, as long as the safety tabs on your original tapes have been removed you're safe.

The split-screen effect lets you compare before and after processing. The video art effect puts a tint or color cast over the light parts of a picture; the rotary control adjusts the degree. The reverse tints the dark areas. Chroma noise reduction lowers color noise and is most effective in large areas of the same color. Negative/positive reverse does that for tapes accidentally made in reverse or for a special effect.

Color and tint operate just like the controls on a TV set, except you can record the altered version of the original. The gamma control will lighten a dark subject against a light background and vice versa. It stretches the contrast ratio at either end of the spectrum by modifying midrange grays.

# Panasonic

### PANASONIC CAMCORDERS \*

PV120	PV400A	PV520	PVSS50
PVS140	PV420	PV530	PVSS75
PVS160	PV500	PVSS40	PVSS65

### PANASONIC VCR'S \*

PV2900	PV4926	PVS4980
PV2912	PV4930	PVS4990
PV4920	PV4960	
PV4924	PV4970	



\* **IMPORTANT!** If the model you desire does not appear in the above list, please call for availability & price.

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OR



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VR295	VR700HF	VG7620	VG7975
VR450		VG7675	VG7980
VR490		VG7685	VG7985

### RCA CAMCORDERS

CC260	CC310	CG9806	CG9815
CC280	CC320	CG9808	CG9825
CC285	CC360	CG9810	

### GE VCR'S

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VG7610	VG7920
VG7615	VG7925
VG7620	VG7975
VG7675	VG7980
VG7685	VG7985

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The black and white balances let you modify color at the two ends of the contrast range without modifying tones in the center of the contrast range. The wide range buttons let you modify them over a wider range and extend the modification capability further on the contrast scale. The white and black clips let you compensate for excessively light or dark areas, for more natural looking pictures.

You cannot fade directly from one picture to another picture from a second source. Selecting auto disables the fade bar. The same restriction applies to the wiper. In addition, it may not work if the source VCR is in variable speed, still or

search modes. Of course, an appropriate fade or wipe mode and pattern must be selected. Using the corrector is easy, but it has limitations and using it well takes practice. Ease of operation is very good.

**Performance.** The video bandpass is -2.3 decibels at 10 megahertz, and the corrector should be capable of a horizontal resolution of over 800 lines. Based on measurements with the controls at detent and signal modifications off, the lumiance signal-to-noise ratio at the S-video input to output is 54.3 (51.8) dB, unweighted, and 55.2 (52.4) dB, weighted. The video S/N input to output is 53 (49.3) dB, unweighted and 54.5 (51.4) dB, weighted. Chroma AM

S/N is 59.8 (62.7) dB, while chroma PM is 49.8 (61.9) dB. (For an explanation of the numbers in parenthesis, see "Editor's Note" on page 42.) The differential gain is within 2 percent and differential phase within 2 degrees. Since the various options modify the signal, they can alter some or all of the above parameters. Video quality is excellent.

The audio frequency response is 20 Hertz to 20 kilohertz, +0.1/-0.9 dB. The audio S/N is 92.1 dB and the total harmonic distortion is 0.07 percent. Stereo separation is 91.2 dB with mic input variable and split between the two channels. The audio mix control determines the quantity of the line audio

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GRS-70	1039.95

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SL340	249.95
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EVS-350	949.95
EVG-3	329.95
GV-8	629.95
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(please print)

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1. Please check the video and video-related products you plan to buy in the next 12 months.

- A  VCR      E  CD player, LV player, combi-player  
 B  TV monitor/receiver      F  video camera/camcorder  
 C  Projection TV      G  Other audio equipment  
 D  A/V system      H  Prerecorded videotapes

2. How many prerecorded videotapes have you purchased in the last 12 months?

- J  More than 25      Q  6-10  
 M  21-25      R  3-5  
 N  16-20      S  1-2  
 P  11-15      T  None

3. If you own prerecorded videotapes, please indicate their format.

- U  VHS      V  Beta      W  8mm      X  Other

4. Are you currently a subscriber to VIDEO?      K  Yes      L  No

Please circle product numbers to receive desired information

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75
76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105
106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135
136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150
151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165
166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180
181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195

Please circle product numbers to receive desired information

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75
76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105
106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135
136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150
151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165
166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180
181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195

Allow 6-8 weeks for information to arrive. Card expires March 20, 1990. V/I/90

Allow 6-8 weeks for information to arrive. Card expires March 20, 1990. V/I/90

## VIDEOTESTS

cellent. We rate picture quality as very good to excellent.

The frequency response of the hi-fi tracks is 20 Hertz to 20 kilohertz, +0.3 to -1.7 dB, at all speeds. On the linear track the -3 dB frequency response is 100 Hz to 12 kHz at SP, 100 Hz to 6.3 kHz at LP and 80 Hz to 5 kHz at SLP. Dynamic range on the hi-fi tracks is 83.4 dB and the audio S/N of the linear tracks is 43.6 dB. The total harmonic distortion is 0.4 percent for the hi-fi tracks and 1.2 percent for the linear track. Audio performance is excellent compared to other hi-fi VCRs.

**Conclusion.** The Panasonic PV-S4990 can make only one programmed in/out edit at a time, while other high-end decks with editing controllers can memorize and execute up to eight edits. However, these decks cost up to twice as much. None of these decks (including the Panasonic) operate at their best unless coupled with another VCR of exactly the same brand and model. We hope the VHS camp will soon establish a single standard for synchro edit VCRs.

The S4990's picture quality is very good to excellent, while ease of opera-

give it an overall performance rating of very good to excellent. Its competitors may have scored higher in individual performance areas, but the S4990 is no slouch. At a suggested price of \$1,599, it is an excellent value. We recommend it highly. ■

# SONY

*continued from page 42*

white and gray available on the selector are not as intense as the white and black selected with the buttons.

The rear panel has the power cord, an accessory AC outlet, a large, finned heat sink and three groups of connectors for stereo audio line in, and source in and output jacks. The source inputs are arranged in rows with stereo audio, video and S-video jacks in each. A high-quality Y/C separator inside prepares video inputs for separate luminance and chrominance processing. S-video is already separated. There are two sets of outputs with stereo audio, video and S-video. All the outputs are always ac-

**Operation.** There are two ways to approach the XV-C900. You can just use the controls until you see what you like, then repeat the steps for a recording, or you can try to understand exactly what part of a video signal each control modifies and how, so you can plan everything. Just winging it is easy but chancey. However, as long as the safety tabs on your original tapes have been removed you're safe.

The split-screen effect lets you compare before and after processing. The video art effect puts a tint or color cast over the light parts of a picture; the rotary control adjusts the degree. The reverse tints the dark areas. Chroma noise reduction lowers color noise and is most effective in large areas of the same color. Negative/positive reverse does that for tapes accidentally made in reverse or for a special effect.

Color and tint operate just like the controls on a TV set, except you can record the altered version of the original. The gamma control will lighten a dark subject against a light background and vice versa. It stretches the contrast ratio at either end of the spectrum by modi-

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE



The black and white balances let you modify color at the two ends of the contrast range without modifying tones in the center of the contrast range. The wide range buttons let you modify them over a wider range and extend the modification capability further on the contrast scale. The white and black clips let you compensate for excessively light or dark areas, for more natural looking pictures.

You cannot fade directly from one picture to another picture from a second source. Selecting auto disables the fade bar. The same restriction applies to the wiper. In addition, it may not work if the source VCR is in variable speed, still or

search modes. Of course, an appropriate fade or wipe mode and pattern must be selected. Using the corrector is easy, but it has limitations and using it well takes practice. Ease of operation is very good.

**Performance.** The video bandpass is -2.3 decibels at 10 megahertz, and the corrector should be capable of a horizontal resolution of over 800 lines. Based on measurements with the controls at detent and signal modifications off, the luminance signal-to-noise ratio at the S-video input to output is 54.3 (51.8) dB, unweighted, and 55.2 (52.4) dB, weighted. The video S/N input to output is 53 (49.3) dB, unweighted and 54.5 (51.4) dB, weighted. Chroma AM

S/N is 59.8 (62.7) dB, while chroma PM is 49.8 (61.9) dB. (For an explanation of the numbers in parenthesis, see "Editor's Note" on page 42.) The differential gain is within 2 percent and differential phase within 2 degrees. Since the various options modify the signal, they can alter some or all of the above parameters. Video quality is excellent.

The audio frequency response is 20 Hertz to 20 kilohertz, +0.1/-0.9 dB. The audio S/N is 92.1 dB and the total harmonic distortion is 0.07 percent. Stereo separation is 91.2 dB with mic input variable and split between the two channels. The audio mix control determines the quantity of the line audio

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## VIDEOTESTS

mixed with the source material. The output level remains within 1 dB over the entire control range. Audio quality is also excellent.

**Conclusion.** The Sony XV-C900 is suitable for amateurs at any level of sophistication, but it has limitations; for example, you can't mix sources. But this feature would make it less foolproof and few amateurs can supply synchronized mixable signals. Video and audio quality are both excellent and ease of operation is very good, so overall quality is very good/excellent. Its suggested price is \$995, a bit more than its competitors, but it also does a lot more. We recommend it highly.

### Sony XV-C900 Video Signal Processor

Mixing Mic Jack:

1 mono, minijack

Video/Stereo Audio Outputs:

2, RCA-type pin jacks

S-Video Outputs:

2, standard DIN connector

Absent Features:

remote control, auxiliary stereo audio output, headphone jack

Accessories:

manual and color illustration sheet

## RESULTS

Video Bandpass:

10 mHz, -2.3 dB

Horiz. Resolution:

over 800 lines

Luminance S/N:

unweighted—54.3 dB;

weighted—55.2 dB

Video S/N:

unweighted—53 dB;

weighted—54.5 dB

Chroma AM S/N:

59.8 dB

Chroma PM S/N:

49.8 dB

Audio Frequency Response:

20 Hz-20 kHz,

+0.1/-0.9 dB

Audio S/N:

92.1 dB

Total Harmonic Distortion:

0.07%

## RATINGS

Video/Stereo Audio Inputs:

2, RCA-type pin jacks

S-Video inputs:

2, standard DIN connector

Additional Audio Line Input:

1, RCA-type pin jacks

Picture Quality:

excellent

Audio Quality:

excellent

Operational Ease:

very good

Overall Performance:

very good/excellent

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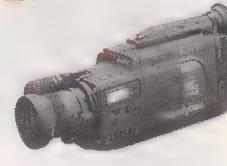
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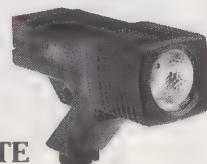


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# BEST GEAR

continued from page 49

## PERSONAL VIDEO

The concept of personal video is catching on so fast that VHS units are beginning to appear. Hitachi's briefcase-sized monitor/VCR earns a Technical Achievement Award for size and performance. Although it has no tuner, it plays VHS tapes on a built-in four-inch screen and can send and receive video and audio signals to and from an external source. It's smaller than a similar combination model from Sharp and a further harbinger of what looks to be a wave of personal video products.

## ACCESSORIES

JVC's JX-S900U is the best video accessory among the half dozen signal selectors, Dolby processors and post-production aids we tested. It has only two busses, but all its inputs and outputs can be used for either video or S-video. By way of contrast, only three of the six inputs on Sony's SB-V1000 processor can handle S-video signals.

We also reviewed Lexicon's CP-1 Pro-Logic Processor and Shure's HTS Theater Reference System, which has a Pro-Logic processor, three amplifiers and six speakers. Although the Lexicon delivered better audio imaging, it was more difficult to operate and less reliable than the Shure. Shure's turnkey system approach is also a first, and it earns our nod as the Best Audio Accessory.

This year's innovative products embody some major steps forward. While we're delighted to see that the VHS camp finally awoke to the desire for easier editing features among consumers, we're still waiting for a perfect editing controller, inexpensive time base correctors and other accessories to make editing the breeze it should, and can, be. ■

## TOP TAPES

continued from page 53

these great pictures are well worth seeing, but the VMA nod goes to *The Cocoanuts*, the Marx Brothers' first film. The 60-year-old print of this musical

about a shady Florida hotel has its share of scratches and soundtrack noise, but the crisp black & white tones are as sharp and reassuring as Groucho's fast wisecracks.

## HORROR

Horror movies, even scary ones, are a dime a dozen on video nowadays. The technical reach of special effects has expanded, while the anything-for-a-shock mentality has sunk to new depths, yielding countless idiotic yet nerve-wracking slasher flicks and supernatural bloodletting. All that's lacking are new plot concepts. This year brought us yet another demon doll in *Child's Play*, a masked maniacal misogynist in *Out of the Dark*, a woman-against-psycho standoff in *Dead Calm* and a drug-crazed Jekyll-and-Hyde nutcase in *Edge of Sanity*. Stephen King finally had another hit with *Pet Sematary* and even TV's voluptuous Elvira got into the act with the nonsensical *Mistress of the Dark*.

For its visual style and traditional horror values, our winner is Dario Argento's *Suspiria*, a gory 1977 gothic (available in both R and unrated versions) about a witches' coven in a Ger-

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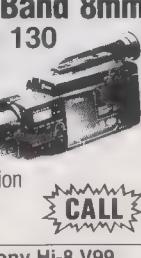


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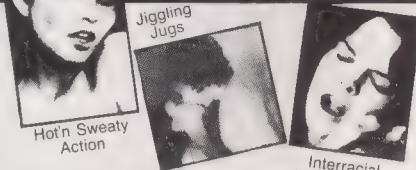
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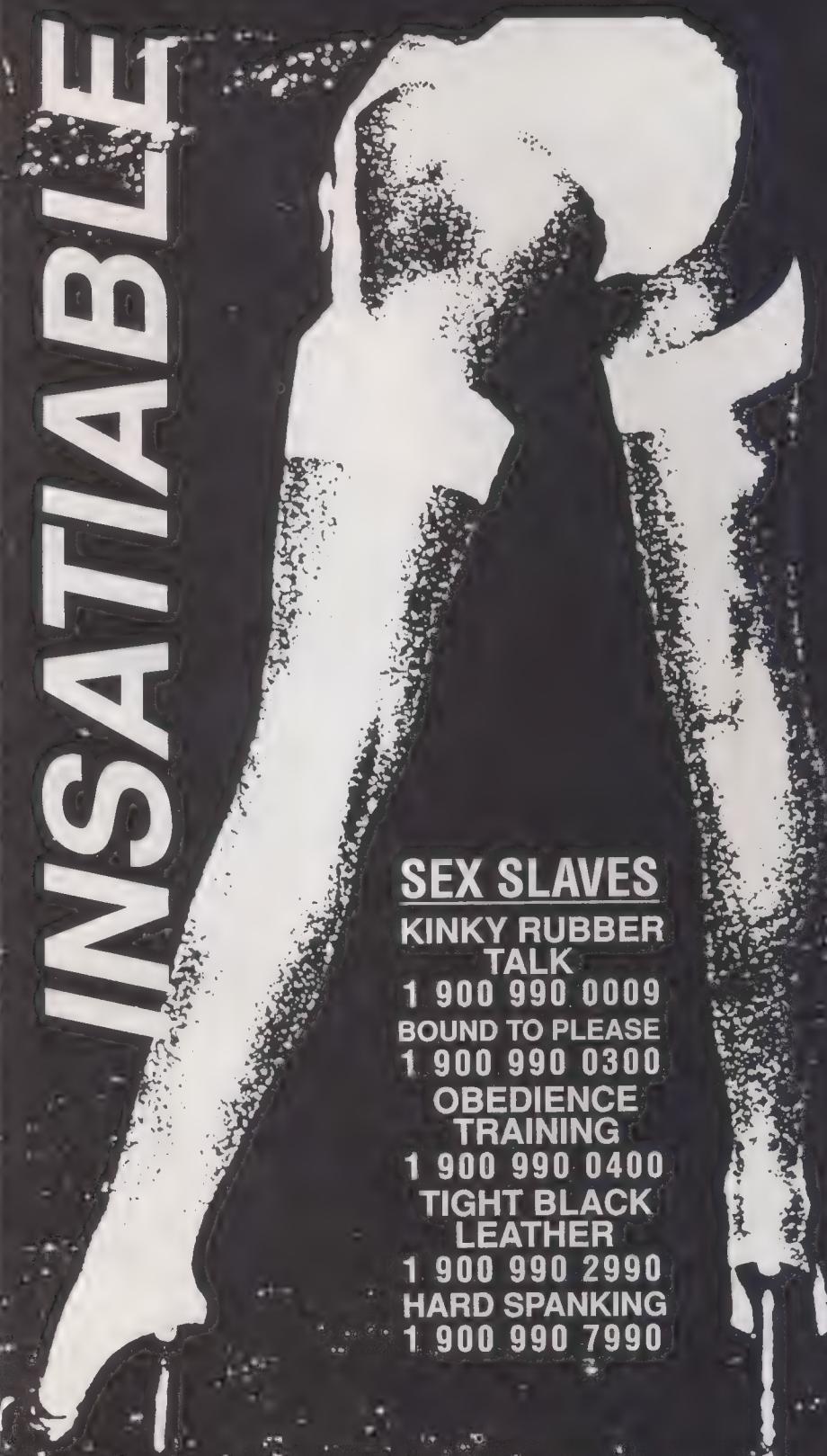
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man dance academy. The pounding rock-'n'-roll soundtrack is loud enough to obscure the dialogue which, given the film's hopeless acting and dubbing, isn't such a bad thing.

#### FOREIGN-LANGUAGE FILMS

Extraordinarily fine nominations arrived from all over the world: Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire* from Germany, *Salaam Bombay!* from India, Juzo Itami's *A Taxing Woman* from Japan, Louis Malle's *Au Revoir les Enfants* from France, *Wedding in Galilee* from Israel, *Pelle the Conqueror* from Scandinavia, *Devil in the Flesh* from Italy, 1958's *Black Orpheus* from Brazil. The latter was released by Connoisseur Video, which deserves special mention for its fine work in bringing foreign films to domestic video.

Hailing from Spain, the 1989 VMA winner is *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, Pedro Almodovar's madcap dissection of women who love men who are bastards. Two of the idiosyncratic director's earlier films, *Dark Habits* and *What Have I Done to Deserve This?*, were also released on video this year, but *Women on the Verge* is the most accessible and enjoyable.

#### SCIENCE FICTION

*Alien Nation* isn't really science fiction. All that separates this cop caper (set in 1991 Los Angeles) from the regular world are creatures ("newcomers") from another planet who have landed and become absorbed into American society as just another despised immigrant minority. This clever idea allows for some simple-minded parables about bigotry while earthly cop James Caan and "slag" flatfoot Mandy Patinkin pair off to solve a brutal interspecies murder. Giving *Alien Nation* (now a network TV show) a VMA may indeed be stretching categories a bit, but the competition (Ken Russell's *Lair of the White Worm* and Traci Lords in *Not of This Earth*) is anemic, and most extra-terrestrials (like those in *Ghostbusters II* and *My Stepmother Is an Alien*) seem to be consigned to other genres.

#### MUSICALS

The usual motley crew of documentaries, docu-dramas and fictional films rocked video screens in 1989. From the reality school, *Rattle and Hum*, U2's self-conscious tour pictorial, had equal shares of transcendent and inane mo-

ments. *The Decline of Western Civilization II* took a jaundiced, occasionally frightening, view of heavy metal. *Imagine* offered what one hopes is the final in-depth/behind-the-scenes/up-close-and-personal look at John Lennon.

Music-filled bio-pics of Jerry Lee Lewis in *Great Balls of Fire* and Charlie Parker in Clint Eastwood's *Bird* were, respectively, ridiculous and reverent. Michael Jackson's bizarre *Moonwalker* demonstrated the creative dangers of unrestricted wealth and influence, while Run-DMC's *Tougher Than Leather* demonstrated the worst that can happen when musicians fancy making a movie.

Enough of this new stuff: Our VMA goes to an old-timer. *I Wanna Hold Your Hand*, Robert Zemeckis' 1978 romp about a bunch of kids chasing the Fab Four around Manhattan, finally made a belated appearance on video this year, putting a nostalgic wax on an era that now seems very long ago.

#### DOCUMENTARY FILMS

It is a rare testament to director Errol Morris' skill that *The Thin Blue Line* actually helped exonerate the convicted murderer, Randall Adams, on whom it

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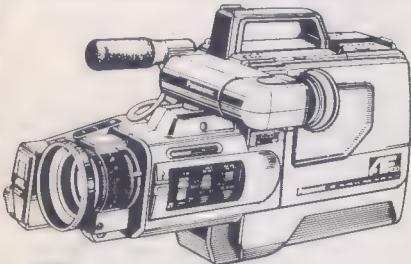


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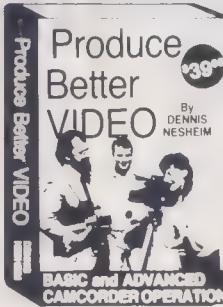
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focuses. Morris set out to make a different movie entirely, but became engrossed with the dubious aspects of Adams' case and ended up creating this haunting, compelling demonstration of Adams' innocence. A mesmerizing mixture of interviews and re-creations that border on surreal, this remarkable work is a clear-cut VMA winner.

### SLEEPER OF THE YEAR

Video provides ample opportunity for overlooked (even unreleased) films — especially strange ones with uncertain appeal — to get a second chance at locating an audience. The resulting potpourri makes this category one of the most unpredictable we consider. Runners-up this year include *The Prince of Pennsylvania*, a lively small-town misadventure with Keanu Reeves, *We Think the World of You*, an understated story of friendship between Gary Oldman, Alan Bates and a dog, and *Bagdad Cafe*, German director Percy Adlon's oblique tale of cross-cultural friendship at a desert truck stop.

Chosen for its remorseless cultural satire and zany invention, our VMA winner is the darkly funny *Eat the Rich*, a hip, mad, energetic conflation of rock'n'roll, cannibalism and revolution with a killer Motorhead soundtrack, numerous spot-the-star cameo appearances and scathing caricatures of Britain's high and mighty.

### COMEDY PROGRAMS

In light of superstar Eddie Murphy's golden-touch film career, his brief tenure as a television ensemble player seems destined for oblivion. Fortunately, there's *The Best of Eddie Murphy/Saturday Night Live*, our 1989 made-for-video comedy VMA winner. This artifact serves as a reminder of Murphy's hysterical impersonations of Buckwheat, Bill Cosby, James Brown, Stevie Wonder and Ron Reagan Jr., not to mention such brilliant creations as Mr. Robinson's Neighborhood and Velvet Jones, educational pimp.

### MUSIC PROGRAMS

The proliferation of quickie video compilations and concert videos has made this category more a popularity contest than a fair fight. Public Enemy deserves credit for an original presentation on *Fight the Power Live*, which cuts handheld camcorder footage into performance clips and promo videos. But in this year of returning rock dinosaurs, the VMA goes to *Who's Better, Who's Best*, a shoddy clip compilation that contains unbelievable vintage film from archives of the Who, providing even longtime fans with previously unseen thrills.

## INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Instead of teaching you how to hang a door, take off pounds or complete a tax return, and in lieu of Larry "Bud" Melman's dumb but inevitable *Couch Potato Workout*, this year's instructional VMA goes to a handy crash course in old cinema. Those unfamiliar with film history can run through *Minute Movie Masterpieces* a few times and gain enough familiarity with such classics as *Birth of a Nation* and *It's a Wonderful Life* to fake it at all but the snootiest cocktail parties.

## DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMS

Amid the continuing rash of dramas about the Vietnam War, we found the year's most powerful recollection of that era in the mail. The deeply moving *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam* pairs newsreel footage with a soundtrack of famous actors reading the profound, mundane, frightened, angry words of soldiers at the front writing to loved ones. The idea sounds prosaic, but *Dear America* provides a disturbing, enlightening view of their experiences and, by extension, ours.

## SPORTS PROGRAMS

The only kind of sports tapes I can watch are about baseball. But since the Yankees had a terrible season, faithful followers had to take solace in video alternatives, like *Mickey Mantle: The American Dream Comes to Life*, a charming, nostalgic blend of stories and pictures. But *Grand Slam!* takes the wholesale approach, offering light-hearted reminiscences by a bunch of legendary players, including Hank Aaron, Ted Williams, Stan Musial, Reggie Jackson and Dave Winfield. Loaded with inspirational baseball spirit, *Grand Slam!* is this year's VMA winner. ■

## DREAM MACHINE

continued from page 62

### 19. REMOTE AUDIO JACKS

Getting back to jacks again, why not add a set to the remote control, for even more listening options.

### 20. GHOST BUSTERS

It may seem like every house in the U.S. is now served by cable TV, but many remain captive to off-the-air reception. Those who still spend time adjusting rabbit ears and roof antennas in search of a better picture will love this idea: new circuitry which digitally eliminates ghosts and other problems that degrade signal quality. They're not yet a substi-

tute for properly installed and aligned antennas—but they can help a lot.

### 21. DISPLAY MUTE

What began as straight forward clock displays have evolved into elaborate multifunction panels for displaying a variety of VCR functions and operations. Great, until you turn off the light and try to fall asleep. Then those same helpful displays often blaze so brightly, the

bedroom almost glows. Give us a switch to turn it all off so we can get a good night's sleep.

### 22. STANDARDIZED EDITING

As VCR users become more interested in editing, they're learning how tough it can be to edit between two VCRs made by different manufacturers. At this point, each manufacturer has its own codes and priorities, which makes such

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editing difficult if not impossible. Many users are discovering the joys of new onboard edit controllers, which are one answer to the lack of standards. But it seems there should be more uniformity among VCR makers.

### 23. MODERN MODULATORS

Since Day One, VCRs have come with switchable RF modulators for playback of tapes on channel 3 or 4, depending on which is unused in any given area. But overlapping 3/4 signals in some cities still cause interference. The cure? Simple. A broader choice of RF channels, possibly including UHF channels.

### 24. DUAL-PORT VCRs

This isn't the first time the idea has been raised. Samsung showed a prototype VHS/8mm deck several years ago, but never introduced it. And now Go Video has a dual-deck VHS VCR. But the possibilities for versatile machines (VHS, Beta and 8mm all-in-ones, etc.) are nearly endless. Politics are politics, but it would be nice to see someone ignore the practical problems and come up with some truly creative combos.

### 25. LONG PAUSE MODE

Automatic pause release (usually after five minutes) is a good feature protecting video heads and tapes from additional wear and tear. But a longer pause mode, with the tape threaded but slackened off the heads to prevent friction, could come in handy during recording. For one thing, it could be used to eliminate the interminable, longer-than-five-minute breaks favored by an increasing number of stations. ■

## POSSESSED

*continued from page 68*

else. It's all networking."

Collectors also recommend checking out catalogues of 16mm films. The films can be transferred to video. Fan clubs, based around one actor or television program, can also be valuable sources. Information on them can be found in collector magazines and general publications. Such clubs sometimes hold conventions where trading takes place.

### TRACKING DOWN TAPES

If a particular series has your interest, Oster recommends finding out if the series is in syndication, then contacting the syndication company. "Find a city where the series is playing and try to arrange for someone there to tape the shows off-air for you," she advises.

Oster said video sources turn up in the most unlikely spots. She found two episodes of *Death Valley Days* by going to U.S. Borax, which she discovered still owned the rights.

Although fraud is infrequent, experts warn against con artists who prey on unsuspecting collectors. To prevent such problems, Gollender suggests requesting potential sellers to play a portion of a video over the phone.

Gollender offers one final word of advice: Don't ever give up hope, "even when you think something doesn't exist. You have to be crazy to do this, but you can't give up." After all, as Albert puts it, "Nothing is really lost forever." ■

## TOKYO TECH

*continued from page 70*

a hardcover book, the black & white printer is designed to be toted around in a pouch with a shoulder strap. Sony introduced a color hard printer for just above \$1,000.

There was no shortage of clever gadgets to look at. Fuji introduced a line of pistol grips for a variety of 8mm camcorders, including Sony's tiny CCD-TR5. Among the oddities were design prototypes from Panasonic for a telescope with a built-in VHS VCR and a color LCD monitor, a spiffy underwater camcorder with a color LCD viewfinder, and a radio-controlled video camera. The camera is built into a rolling gizmo that looks like a L'Eggs pantyhose container. Whoever uses it zooms it around with a wireless joystick module that also houses a color LCD monitor, so that you can watch what the tiny, mobile camera sees.

### OSAKA SIGHTS

Speaking of zooming, a three-hour ride by Bullet Train whisks one at 150 mph from Tokyo south to Osaka, where A/V buffs can dream year-round at the Panasonic Technology Museum and where the 1989 Japan Electronics Show offered a double jolt of high tech and high prices. JVC and Seiko unwrapped a production model of their jointly developed LCD video projector, which boasts an unprecedented 350 lines of horizontal resolution with two active matrix LCD panels of 210,000 pixels each. An

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# VIDEO CLASSIFIEDS

To place an advertisement in VIDEO Magazine's Classifieds:

**REQUIREMENTS:**

Payment must accompany advertisement. We accept checks, money orders and Mastercard/Visa. Advertisement and payment must be received by the 25th of the third month preceding the cover date. (i.e. For insertion in VIDEO Magazine's February 1990 issue, advertisement and payment must be received by November 27th). If the closing date falls on a weekend or holiday, the issues closes on the next business day. NOTE: ADVERTISERS USING A P.O. BOX NUMBER MUST INCLUDE PERMANENT STREET ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND CONTACT PERSON'S NAME FOR VIDEO MAGAZINE'S RECORDS. ADVERTISEMENTS RECEIVED WITHOUT THIS INFORMATION WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

All advertisements are subject to Publisher's approval. VIDEO Magazine is not responsible for typographical errors. No "regular" advertisements will be allowed for the exchange, rental, trade, or sale of videotapes due to the potential problem of copyright infringement. No advertisement will be accepted which offers for sale products or services that have been illegal because they infringe on copyright protection or other forms of property ownership.

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**VIDEOTAPING WEDDINGS?** Quality animation, titles, customized competitive edge. FREE INFORMATION: "Our Wedding". Box 18H, Hartsdale, NY 10530.

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**TALK YOUR WAY TO WEALTH** for details phone (303) 399-3733 anytime.

**WE WANT YOUR TAPES FOR TV!** Especially if newsworthy, thought provoking or funny. Send a few minutes: Prefer 3/4" (VHS or Hi8 ok). THE 90's, 400 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611. We pay if they go on TV. We return tapes.

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**INCREASE YOUR PROFITS! ADVERTISING IN VIDEO MAGAZINE'S CLASSIFIED SECTION HAS PROVEN SUCCESSFUL FOR MANY INDEPENDENT ENTREPRENEURS!** VIDEO MAGAZINE OFFERS YOU NATIONWIDE EXPOSURE AND SALES! CALL MARY AU AT (212) 947-6500 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

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Camera ready art required and pre-payment.

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400 West 34th Street  
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(212) 947-6500



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No Money? Open a Cheap Video Rental Store. Information: 1-804-572-2750.

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**VHS LABELS** - Pinfeed, 1,000 Face or Spine \$21.95. PROGRAM \$34.95. ProLabel, 2347 Deckman Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20906.

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**FREE CATALOGS!** VIDEOS, do-it-yourself manuals, computer software, on electrical wiring, gardening, carpentry, plumbing, wood working and 100's of others. AAVIM, 120 Engineering Center, Athens, GA 30602. 1-800-228-4689.

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**ASIAN WOMEN DESIRE ROMANCE!** Overseas, sincere, attractive. SUNSHINE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE-Dept ZR, Box 5500, Kailua-Kona, HI 96745. (808) 325-7707.

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## VIDEO CLASSIFIEDS

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**ORIGINAL MOVIE POSTERS!** STAR PHOTOS! TWO CATALOGS. 3000 ILLUSTRATIONS \$3.00: POSTER GALLERY, BOX 2745-H3, ANN ARBOR, MI 48106. (313) 665-3151.

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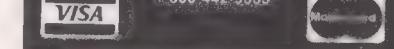
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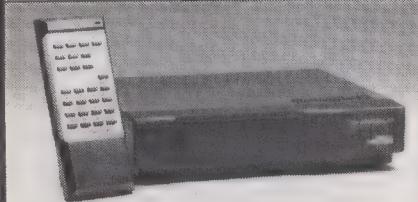
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### STICKER SHOCK

Notable also at the Osaka show were TV multipath ghost cancelers, widely discussed for U.S. application and already used in Japanese TV transmissions. Refinements in high definition TV included compact decoders for the

MUSE broadcast system used in Japan. Wide-screen, high-definition monitor prices were, well, definitely high: Sony tagged a 55-inch rear-projection model at \$55,000 and Toshiba showed a 50-inch rear projector for \$70,000. Perhaps the clearest perspective on high-def pricing came from Toshiba's 36-inch monitor, stickered at \$32,500—or nearly 10 times the cost of a current 35-inch high-resolution TV.

Prices notwithstanding, it's hard to just say no to HDTV. At Panasonic's museum, a brief demonstration of underwater photography on a wide screen had a group of visiting journalists swimming in their seats. When it was over, the first thing you wanted to do was reach for a towel—then write out your shipping address. Billing? Oh, yeah, send it to my editor.

Aside from a high-definition video-disc player from Sony (a mere \$23,000), neither show offered staggering breakthroughs in laser-based players, which was something of a surprise since the videodisc, which Pioneer and others are trying valiantly to pump up in this country, is a hot commodity in Japan. Stores in the Akihabara, Tokyo's famous electronics district, touted bins bulging with movies, classical and rock concerts, operas, aerobics and enough jazz titles—discs just not seen here—to make one abandon the Village Vanguard.

Tickets to this galaxy of laser shows were going for about \$50 to \$60 per disc. Hmm. Can we expect the eventual high-def versions to top out at tenfold the price, say, \$600 a spin? The line forms on the right. ■

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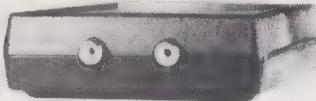
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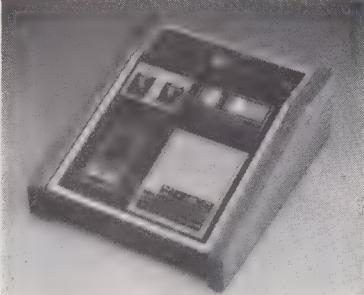
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Four Elements Five Elements  
Metal Mount  
Only 8.2 Ounces Case Included

**Cambron** 6 Piece Video Enhancers Filter and Multi Image Kit For Video Cameras  
Special Filter for Video Cameras Cuts Reflection and Glare

**Cambron** Slide to Video Duplicator 6995 **Cambron** Video Lux Light Meter 995  
VIDEO CARRYING BAG for Camcorders \$4995  
TELECINE CONVERTER 8mm and 16mm Movies TO VIDEO 4995  
VIDEO FISHEYE Ultra Wide Angle Lens \$6995  
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VIDEO

# MAIL-ORDER GUIDELINES

At VIDEO Magazine, we believe our readers should get what they order from our mail-order advertisers at the prices indicated and in a timely fashion. We stand behind that belief by taking steps to determine that an advertiser is reputable and reliable before accepting an advertisement. Additionally, if we learn that an advertiser engages in a regular pattern of unfair or improper business practices, we will deny that advertiser the opportunity to advertise.

Nonetheless, the responsibility for fair dealing ultimately lies with the advertisers themselves, and unfortunately VIDEO Magazine cannot guarantee their behavior. Therefore, we feel it is important for our readers to know what their rights are and to follow the tips set forth below for purchasing merchandise by mail. Further, we are prepared to use our best efforts to assist any customer who has been improperly or unfairly dealt with by one of our advertisers.

Our requirements for advertising in VIDEO Magazine and our offer of assistance to aggrieved purchasers do not in any way limit either the obligation of an advertiser to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations or our customers' ability to enforce their rights under those laws.

## MAIL-ORDER BILL OF RIGHTS

Under federal law, if you order advertised merchandise by mail, the advertiser must ship your order when promised in the advertisement—or, if no delivery date is promised, within 30 days of receiving your order. If the advertiser fails to ship your order in a timely fashion, you may cancel your order and are entitled to a prompt refund.

If the initial shipping date cannot be met, the advertiser must notify you in writing and give you the option of either cancelling your order and receiving a full refund or agreeing to a new shipping date.

If the new shipping date is less than 30 days after the original shipping date, the merchandise may be shipped to you unless you notify the advertiser in writing of your desire to cancel. If the new shipping date is more than 30 days after the original shipping date, or no new shipping date is provided, your order must be cancelled by the advertiser unless you inform the advertiser in writing that you still want the merchandise.

If the advertiser is unable to meet the new shipping date, the option process starts again—except that, regardless of the length of the second delay, the order must be cancelled unless you inform the advertiser in writing that you consent to the delay. If you accept an indefinite delay, you may change your mind at any time and so notify the advertiser in writing.

**Note:** The 30-day time period does not begin to run on a credit card sale until the advertiser charges your account. Also, these regulations do not apply to C.O.D. orders.

If your order is cancelled, a refund must be made within 7 days on cash purchases or within one billing cycle on credit card purchases.

You may keep any unordered merchandise sent to you; you need not pay for it or send it back. An advertiser who sends you a bill or otherwise attempts to collect any money from you for unordered merchandise is in violation of federal law.

**Note:** These regulations do not pertain to orders placed over the telephone and charged to a credit card.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR MAIL ORDER PURCHASERS

1. Read the ad carefully.

2. Whether you place your order by mail or by telephone, confirm the exact price (including any rebates) and any additional costs such as warranties, shipping, handling and insurance before you place your order.

3. Check with the advertiser regarding any warranties offered or available for purchase.

4. Check whether the advertiser has a return policy.

5. Keep a record of your order and all other transactions and get the names of all persons with whom you speak.

6. Never send cash. Pay by check or money order or with a credit card so you will have a record of your transaction. If you pay by credit card, you may have a greater measure of recourse in the event the advertiser does not perform. (Check the complaint procedures of your credit card companies.)

7. If you receive damaged or improper merchandise, contact the advertiser as soon as possible.

8. Get a receipt from the shipper whenever you return merchandise.

9. Since VIDEO Magazine will not continue to accept advertising from businesses that have engaged in a regular pattern of unfair or improper dealing with our readers, try to determine which have been long-standing advertisers.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

1. Allow 30 days for receipt of order or delay notification.

2. Contact the advertiser in writing, stating the merchandise ordered, the price and date of order, and the nature of your complaint. Include proof of payment (copy of cancelled check, showing both sides, credit card statement, etc.). Keep a copy for your records.

3. Allow two weeks for a response from the advertiser.

4. If your complaint is still not resolved, contact us in writing (no phone calls, please), enclosing copies of all correspondence and proof of payment along with an explanation of what has transpired.

Mail to:

VIDEO Magazine  
Advertiser Complaint Dept.  
460 West 34th Street  
New York, NY 10001

Other organizations that can assist you if you have a problem.

The Direct Mail Marketing Association  
Mail Order Action Line  
6 East 43rd Street  
New York, NY 10017

Your local postmaster  
(Ask for the name and address of the appropriate "Inspector-in-Charge.")

Your state or local consumer protection office or the office closest to the advertiser.

The Better Business Bureau.

Your state Attorney General's office.

**PLANET ELECTRONICS**  
YOU FIND A BETTER DEAL  
NOBODY BEATS US  
WELL BETTER OUR DEAL  
30441 Reed Road, Mountain View, CA 94031  
800-247-4663 (415) 467-2235

# SPECIALS

► PLEASE READ THE MAIL ORDER RULES

**CAM POCKET**

Carrying Holster  
for Camcorders  
Provides Instant  
Access • Drawing  
Cover • Compartments  
for Spare Batteries  
and Tapes

**simo**



**\$34.95**

**Integrated Video  
Lighting System**

50 Watt DC Quartz  
Halogen • Battery  
Pack Attaches  
Underneath Cam-  
corder • Battery  
Also Doubles as  
Power Source for  
Virtually All Cam-  
corders

**\$119.95**

**simo**

**RICOH**

HI BAND  
450 Lines of Resolution  
1/10,000 Shutter Speed • 8x  
Zoom • Pro Mic Date/Time  
Special Effects/Timing • Fades  
Titles/Scenes • Still Slow/Mo/  
Frame Advance • Hi BAND • 4 Lux •  
R-800H PLEASE CALL

**RICOH**

8x Zoom • 1/4,000 Shutter Speed  
• Fades Titles/Scenes • 4 Lux  
Date or Time Stamp • Superim-  
pose 4 Titles  
**R-800H PLEASE CALL**

**MINOLTA**

VHS • 3 Lux • 8x Zoom • 1/2 Inch  
CCD • 1/1,000 Shutter Speed  
Auto Focus • Auto Exposure • Auto  
White • Audio/Video Fade  
**V10 PLEASE CALL**

**MINOLTA**

8mm • 4 Lux • 1/1,000 Shutter  
Speed • Audio/Video Fade •  
Flying Erase Heads • 8x Zoom  
**881 PLEASE CALL**

**VIVITAR**

Nobody  
BEATS  
US  
\$99  
All in 1 Transfer Photos/Films/  
Slides to Video Tape  
**UVC-1 PLEASE CALL**

**LASER**

MULTIDISC PLAY-  
ERS NOW IN STOCK  
**PLEASE CALL**

**GE**

3 Lux • Flying Erase Head 8x •  
Built-in Speaker • Audio/Video  
Dub • Macro Focus • Time Lapse •  
Auto Date Stamp • Auto White  
Balance • CC9915  
**TOO LOW TO PRINT PRICE**

**GE**

1 Lux • Flying Erase Head 8x •  
Built-in Speaker • Audio/Video  
Dub • Macro Focus • Time Lapse •  
Auto Date Stamp • Auto White  
Balance • CC9920  
**TOO LOW TO PRINT PRICE**

**SUNPAK**

2 Hr. Quick Charge • 25-35  
Minutes • 18 to 30 Watt Halogen  
• Auto Sensor • Adjusts to Accu-  
rate Lighting  
**AUTO CV300 \$144**

**OLYMPUS**

8mm • 420 Lines • 360,000 Pixels  
8x • 7 Lux • Piezo Auto Focus • Fly  
Erase Head • Multi Shutter Speed  
**VX803 PLEASE CALL**

**TOSHIBA**

SVHS • HiFi • 4 Head • 11 Digital  
Effects • Jog & Shuttle Dial •  
Optical Scanner • Character Gen-  
erator • Syncro Edit  
**SVF 990 PLEASE CALL**

**TRANSFER-IT**

Now you can preserve your home  
movies on video tape easily and  
economically • Converts home  
movies and slides to video • Large  
8x10 screen REG \$39.95  
**SALE \$29.95**

**COPY CAM**

Camcorder • Enhancer • Increases  
Video Sharpness and Clarity with  
Sharpness Control • Balances  
Audio w/Audio Zoom  
**\$44**

**AUDIO/VIDEO MAESTRO**

Enhance Video  
Stereo Audio Mixer  
**\$69 AMBICO VO629**

**800-247-4663**

advertisers information, circled No. 60 on reader service card



AMERICAN BUSINESS BUREAU  
Pledged to Arbitrate  
WE ARE COMMITTED

5 STAR  
C.O.D.  
RATING  
WELCOME

**PLANET**

IF YOU FIND A BETTER DEAL

NOBODY BEATS US

**ELECTRONICS**

WE'LL BETTER OUR DEAL!

38411 Ford Road, Westland, MI 48185

800-247-4663 IN MI  
CALL: (313) 467-2235

MORE DETAILS  
IN CATALOG  
\$3.00  
REFUNDABLE

**SONY**  
Full Video Line



CAMCORDS  
BETA

**RCA**  
Full Video Line



CALL FOR  
ALL MODELS

**Panasonic**

AG-450



Please Call  
SVHS Record/Playback • Piezo Auto Focus • Auto White Balance • 10x Zoom • 200mm Lens • 1/3" Color CCD • Erase Head • Color Balance Control • Iris Control • Auto Date/Time Function • 360,000 Pixels • 420 Lines Of Resolution • 7 Lux



Please Call  
Piezo T/T Auto Focus • Auto Iris • Manual Overdrive • Self Timer • Remote Control • Intensity Recording • Camera • Color Level Control • Auto Repeat • Search Function • Rotary Erase Head • A.T.W. • Auto Time/Date Recording • 6x Zoom • Adjustable High Shutter Speed • High Capacity CCD Chip

## CAMCORDERS AND VCR'S

**NEC**

We Carry The  
Full Video Line

**RICOH**

Please Call

**OLYMPUS**

Full Video Line

**MINOLTA**

All Models

**KYOCERA**

Please Call

**JVC**

We Carry The  
Full Video Line

**TOSHIBA**

Please Call

**3 OR 5 YEAR WARRANTY FOR VCR/CAMCORDS**  
NO DEDUCTIBLE - ALL PARTS & LABOR - \$69/3 YRS. \$99/5 YRS.

**Panasonic**  
Full Video Line



NOBODY BEATS US  
CALL FOR  
ALL MODELS

**Canon**  
Full Video Line



CALL FOR  
ALL MODELS

**CITIZEN**  
COLOR  
VIEWFINDER

See your video  
productions in  
color through  
3" LCD monitor  
Fits all camcords

\$169. \*

**AMBICO PRO**  
FLUID HEAD  
TRIPOD

PRO MODEL  
• Shaky, jitter-  
free shooting for  
camcorders—  
very lightweight  
• All three 2 way  
pan head  
• Quick release  
camera mount  
• 1/4" 2 pin  
tension adjusters  
• Square channel legs with flip locks  
• Friction-control center column brace  
• Rubber feet with retractable spikes

\$99.

**AZDEN**  
VIDEO EDITOR

Edit as you view  
Add background music or  
narration  
Compatible with all formats  
Preview feature - Change  
editing before final production

\$398. \*

**NADY** \*  
WIRELESS PRO USE  
LAPEL MIC TRANSMITS  
OVER 250 FT.!



Model VRLT 151  
We Stock Hand Held Too

# NOBODY BEATS US

WE  
WELCOME  
CALLS!  
IF YOU FIND A BETTER DEAL —  
WE'LL BETTER OUR DEAL!

WE  
SHIP  
C.O.D.!

**800-247-4663**

**JVC** Fits All  
Camcords

CHARACTER  
GENERATOR

Universal Title Adds Titles  
With Ease to Any System • 4  
Character Sizes • 124 Characters • 8 Page Memory • 6  
Speed Scroll • 20 Character/Line • 7 Lines/8 Page CG-V600

189.95 \*

**AZDEN Pro Mics VOTED #1**



WMS-PRO  
VHF Free 174-216MHz  
Dual Frequencies  
1/4" XLR  
2 Mic System  
Professional Hand-Held Mic  
Desktop Condenser Clip-on Mic  
PLEASE CALL



WMS-20 II  
Dual Frequencies  
Range 100 Feet  
comes with Mic • Hand-Held Mic  
• Plus Clip-on • Plug Either Mic into  
the Wireless Transmitter  
\$98.



ECZ600  
Electret condenser  
zoom mic  
w/dual pattern set to the long  
position for a wide beam, letting you zoom in on your  
subject cutting out side noises. In  
the short position it acts like a  
wide-angle mic

## Video Accessories

**AZDEN**

\* **AZDEN** \*

VIDEO PRO

VIDEOPRO

HEADSET/BOOM  
MICROPHONE

VIDIMATE

VIDICRAFT

Deliberately Excellent \*

VIDIMATE

The perfect companion for  
camcorders. Sharpened optics and all video  
image enhancement features image enhancement,  
color correction, and brightness  
control. Adds narration or  
background music.

VDM-200 \$239.95

**AUDIO MIXER**  
WITH AUDIO/VIDEO FADE



8995

**SOUNDS RIGHT**

Audio mixer—combines up to 3  
sources of sound at same time.  
stereo or mono. Audio/video fade.  
Includes microphone.

\*

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# OFF THE AIR

## Stereo television: The SAP is rising

BY DAVID LACHENBRUCH

That indicator light marked "SAP," "Audio B" or "Audio 2" on your stereo TV set may have seemed little more than a vestige of some forgotten feature, but it could soon begin flashing in earnest. Probably the most underused feature of modern television sets, SAP stands for "secondary audio program." When multichannel television sound (MTS) was approved back in 1984, it became possible not only for stations to broadcast stereo sound, but to add a completely separate sound channel as well—in addition to, and simultaneously with, the stereo soundtrack.

In the early days of MTS, it was widely forecast that SAP would become more popular than stereo. In fact, one major TV set manufacturer produced a large number of moderately priced 19-inch non-stereo SAP models under the mistaken impression that bilingual broadcasting would become an instant hit. A few stations are broadcasting simultaneously in two languages now—most notably KTLA in Los Angeles, which carries live Spanish translations of its newscasts.

Now, however, SAP may be poised to fulfill its true potential. The signs are good: About 25 percent of American homes are now equipped with MTS receivers. Of the approximately 600 MTS-capable television stations, more than 100 can also generate the SAP signal. Even those which can't do so now can add SAP equipment at a nominal cost—as little as \$5,000, depending on how the station is equipped; that's a bargain price to put a radio station on the air.

Best of all, somebody is now taking the initiative. The pioneer is WNET, the New York PBS flagship, with ambitious plans which could lead it to full-time around-the-clock SAP. The station plans many ingenious uses of the extra channel—most related to the picture on the screen, but some completely uncon-

nected to the video.

Backed initially by grants from Sansui and Stereo Review, WNET already has begun SAP-casting. Its first dual-audio broadcast was the musical *Show Boat* on PBS's *Great Performances* series. The SAP channel carried a complete description of the action on the screen to



Rain SAP: Gene Kelly's *Singing in the Rain* comes on a videodisc that includes a SAP commentary.

enable the sight-impaired to "see" the program. Other PBS stations also are using the SAP channel as an aid to the blind—WGBH-TV in Boston is adding descriptive services relating to its telecasts, and the New Jersey educational stations have featured talking books for the blind on their SAP channels.

But *Show Boat* is only the beginning for WNET. The first regularly scheduled SAP broadcasts will be simultaneous Spanish-language translations of *The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*.

WNET is investigating straight "radio" programming on the SAP channel as well. As a follow-up to its classical

music TV programs, it plans to offer audio-only continuations of the concerts—the same orchestra or the same composer—for those who want more. At presstime, the station was negotiating with the BBC to carry its World Service shortwave broadcasts for people who want to listen without a picture on the tube (by turning the brightness all the way down).

When it's not in use for something else, SAP will serve as an aural TV guide, alerting viewers to upcoming programs. The station is also considering use of the channel as an aid to videotaping.

Other TV stations have experimented with movies, using the original theatrical soundtrack on SAP (with no expletives deleted), while the bleeped-out version is carried on the primary track. There have even been some experiments in surround sound, with the SAP channel directed to a rear speaker. This requires some special equipment.

SAP programs can be taped on a stereo VCR with the secondary channel intact, and the tapes may be viewed with or without the SAP channel. (There's no reason why we can't have pre-recorded tapes and discs with an SAP channel.) And if you have a stereo VCR with MTS, you can receive SAP even on a non-MTS TV by using the VCR's tuner.

Many MTS TV sets don't permit viewers to listen to SAP and main stereo channels simultaneously, which could be a disadvantage with some types of programming. All sets should have SAP buttons on their remote controls to permit easy switching between audio channels.

With a solid base of MTS-equipped TV sets and VCRs, SAP should be ready to roll, bringing the possibility of a new dimension in programming. Now that a major metropolitan market station has broken the ice, other stations can be expected to start experimenting. You can experiment, too, by flicking the SAP switch occasionally. You may be surprised to learn that SAP activity is beginning in your area. ■

David Lachenbruch is Editorial Director of Television Digest.

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